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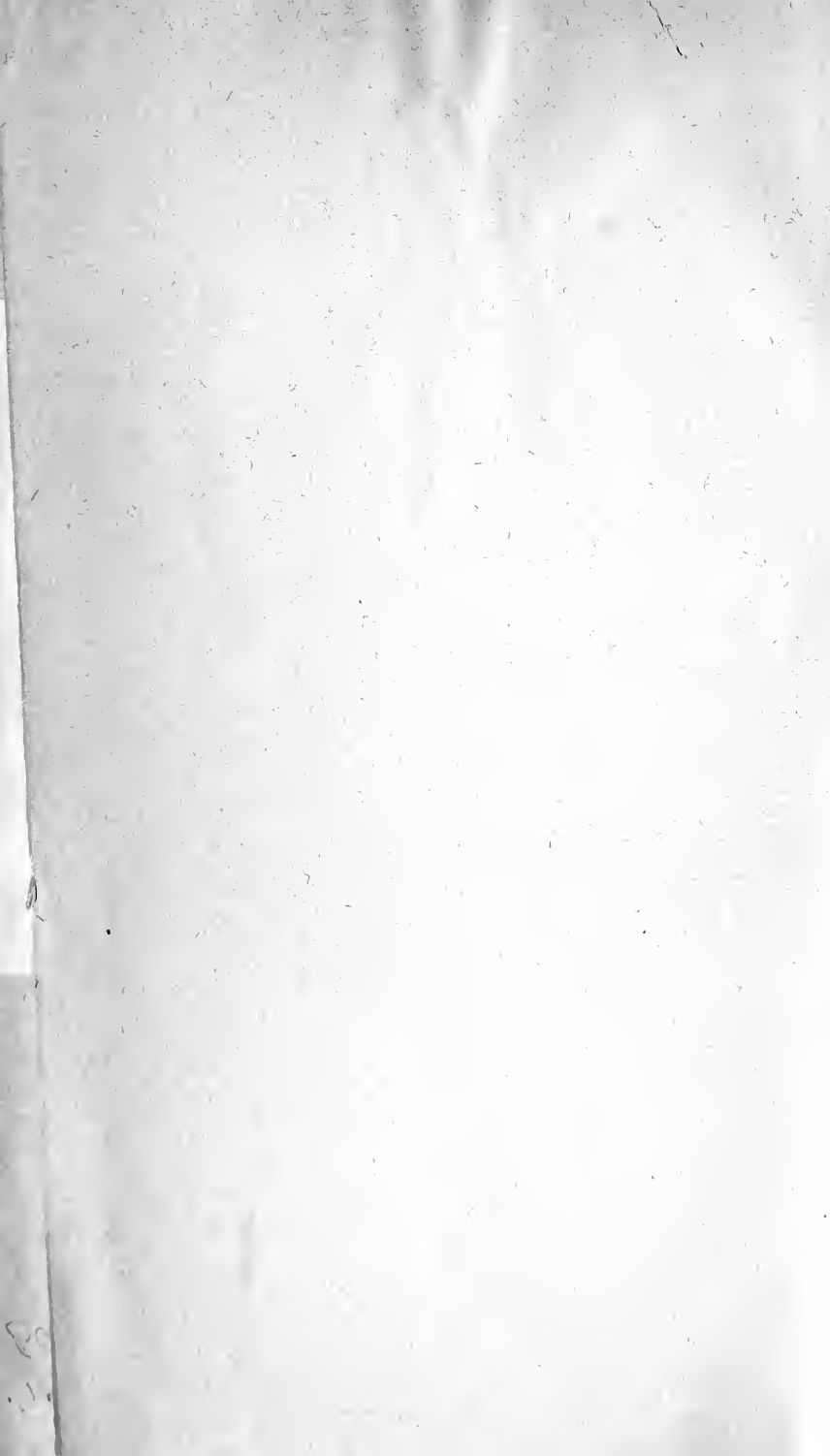


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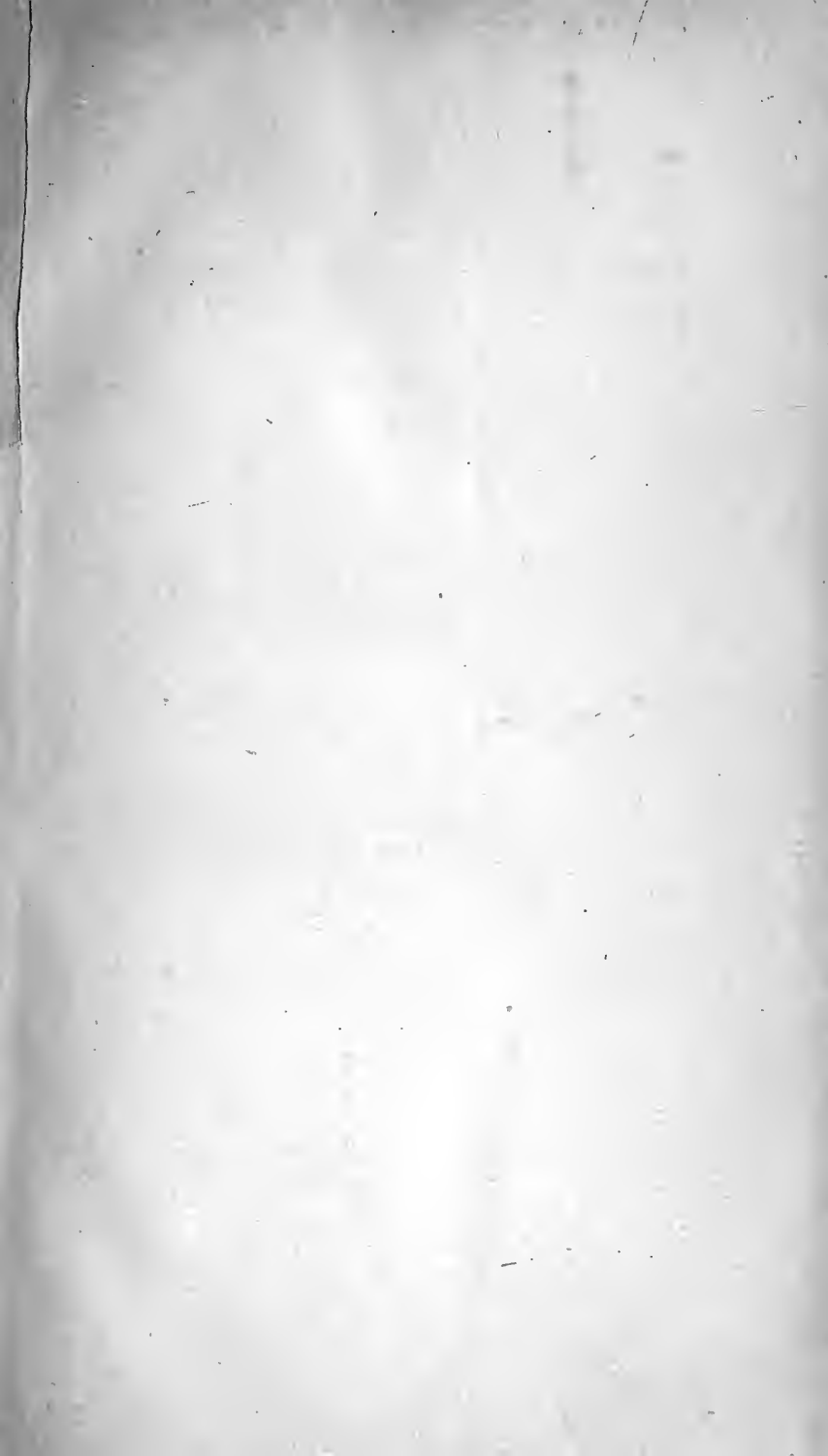
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DISCOURSES,  
ARGUMENTATIVE AND DEVOTIONAL,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF  
THE JEWISH RELIGION.

DELIVERED

AT THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVEH ISRAEL, IN PHILADELPHIA,  
IN THE YEARS 5590—5597,

BY

ISAAC LEESER,  
MINISTER OF THE ABOVE CONGREGATION.

3. 20. 15  
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ה'לוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע :  
ירמ' כג' כט' :

“ Behold! thus is my word, says the Lord, like the fire, and like the  
hammer that shivers the rock.” JEREMIAH xxiii. 29.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

5590 — 5593.

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# DEDICATION.

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TO THE

**RIGHT REV. ABRAHAM SUTRO,**

CHIEF RABBI OF THE DIOCESE OF MÜNSTER AND MARK.

HONOURED RABBI!

IN inscribing these volumes to you, I cannot refrain from publicly acknowledging that to you it is chiefly due that I ever ventured to undertake the task of a public teacher. I well remember the time, when scarcely nine summers had passed over my head, that you arrived among us; and how the first sermon I ever heard delivered, the one you addressed to our congregation, made a powerful impression upon us all, not excepting the little unconscious boy I then was. You, also, as I advanced in life, encouraged my humble striving to excel, and I can never forget the

kindness with which you always seconded the efforts of my blessed teacher. I trust that the fruits of maturer years, which I now present to you, may be thought worthy of your acceptance, and convince you that your guidance and instruction, as well as your example, have not been lost upon the one who is now far removed from the sphere of your useful operations.

May many blessings attend you; and let me hope that long life and extended usefulness may be granted you from above, to draw many more hearts into the service of our almighty Father, as you have done in the case of

Your devoted servant,

and obedient scholar,

ISAAC LEESER.

Philadelphia,  
Tebeth 29th, 5597.

## P R E F A C E.

---

IN the following work the reader is presented with the labour of more than six years. Many of the Discourses were composed, when suffering both under mental and bodily afflictions, when any exertion was extremely painful; and it must not be imagined, that, what appears to read smoothly, and as if written off-hand, costs not an intense degree of thought and application. Very often the labour was interrupted by severe sickness and other untoward events, and hence the frequent long intervals between the different treatises. Still I never relaxed in my endeavours to diffuse religious and useful knowledge, and I fervently trust that I have succeeded, to a certain extent, to impart some information which is not readily accessible in books in general circulation.

The first twenty Discourses were re-written, because I could not suffer my first attempts to come before the public without a thorough revision. The others, however, which were composed chiefly after the chastening hand of the Lord had fallen heavily on me, were prepared with more care, and I therefore only corrected them carefully, and altered those parts which appeared objectionable or defective. I will not assert, that I could not have altered the whole series, and perhaps improved it much more than I have done; but still I was obliged to stop somewhere in the alterations I introduced, and I candidly believe that further changes, curtailments and enlargements would not have enabled me to produce any thing more deserving of approbation; as, what might in this manner have been gained in beauty of style, would to a certainty have been sacrificed to the force and ingenuousness always belonging to the first efforts of the mind, before they have been subjected to the cold and capricious judgment of criticism. Doubtless another might have used the pruning knife more frequently and relentlessly, and have improved the work much more than has been done by me; still I may say, that I acted as impartially towards myself as I was able, and excused nothing that I found to be faulty. And entire passages

have been taken out, sentences altered, words substituted, and the arguments condensed, at times even after the matter was in type; which I was the more enabled to do, as I have been uniformly in the habit of laying my writings aside and never to recur to them till the lapse of considerable time, perhaps not till after several years. Hence, I had very often forgotten the whole of a discourse, and upon reading and preparing it for the press, it was as new to me almost as to an entire stranger. To this it is also owing, that in two instances, I believe, I chose the same texts, and at times introduced parts of arguments and quotations which had been employed on prior occasions. I hope, however, that these errors (for errors they certainly are) will not be thought of sufficient magnitude, nor of so frequent recurrence, as to offend the reader; at all events I am induced to think, that the like faults are almost inseparable from a labour of so many years, without a degree of care and fearfulness, which would materially injure the force and energy of a rapid flow of ideas.

The several sketches of character introduced, although I confess that many of them have been taken from actual observation and historical personages, will, I hope nevertheless, be found not to contain any thing offensive to any one; for although I would always condemn crime and impiety in language of becoming severity: I should be sorry to be deemed guilty of personalities, and of dragging the faults of the living or dead before the public gaze without a sufficient and cogent reason.

In place of giving out a text and stringing a sermon to the same, as is customary with most preachers, I have generally chosen to introduce it in the middle or even at the conclusion of my discourses; because I desired to illustrate a doctrinal point, and then show its consonance with the text of Scripture, believing this course less fatiguing and more interesting to the audience than the usual mode.

I laboured under the same disadvantage of not possessing many books of reference, as on former occasions, and I had to remedy it by a greater degree of care and more intense study.—The translations of passages from Scripture are mostly according to the opinions of our commentators, and I did not often consult the common English version; hence no doubt great difference in the wording from this Standard will often be met with.

As yet I have found no publisher for my works; and I have therefore to undertake the literary as well as the mercantile part of the enterprize. The latter is particularly harrassing to one who, like myself, has no business connexions, and has to rely upon persons otherwise engaged to dispose of the



books, which is a task that but few are willing to engage in. I therefore return my sincere thanks to those who have endeavoured to assist me in my undertaking by inducing others to encourage it, and I only regret that their exertions have not met with a better return.—I hope, however, that they will not relax for the future, believing as I do, conscientiously, that in circulating the few works I have edited they aid in the dissemination of truth, as I have endeavoured to let nothing escape my pen which could be injurious in the least to the cause of morality and the public welfare.—In addition to the foregoing, I have to state, that if I had taken my former want of success as a warning, I should never have obtruded myself again upon the public, since the first work I issued brought no profit, and the second caused a considerable pecuniary loss.—Still the favourable opinion expressed of both by competent judges, and the kindness and encouraging language of sincere friends have counselled me to persevere, and I have but little doubt that the present effort will be more successful than the preceding ones, although the substantial manner and good style in which the mechanical part has been executed will prevent any considerable gain, even if the whole edition, which is but half of the “Instruction” and two-thirds of the “Jews and Mosaic-law” should be disposed of. Nevertheless, the increased number of subscribers is highly gratifying, as it abundantly proves, that neither myself nor my efforts have sunk in public estimation.—But I believe it is time to dismiss the subject, as otherwise some one, too much disposed to criticize words and motives, might have some show of reason to suppose interested views of a sordid nature as the cause of this publication. I do not lay claim to an exemption from human faults and frailties; but in justice to myself I may maintain, without vanity or self-deception, that my whole course, both public and private, will bear me out in saying, that pecuniary gain has had but a small share in prompting my actions. More I need not say, as I am not yet accused, and if this should unfortunately be the case, then it will be time enough to reply.

I should like to tell the reader something more of the rise and progress of my public teaching; but the time I have already consumed in speaking of myself, personally, admonishes me to leave it for a future and more fitting occasion. Yet I must remark in passing, that the whole of the Discourses may be viewed as extemporaneous effusions in writing; since I never prepared them, with but very few exceptions, till a day or two before the day I spoke them; and in revising them for the press, I took especial care not to alter the subject matter more than correctness of argument and of diction

required.—I have done.—The book is before the public; and in asking an indulgent judgment, I wish not faults to be extenuated or defects to be passed over without censure.

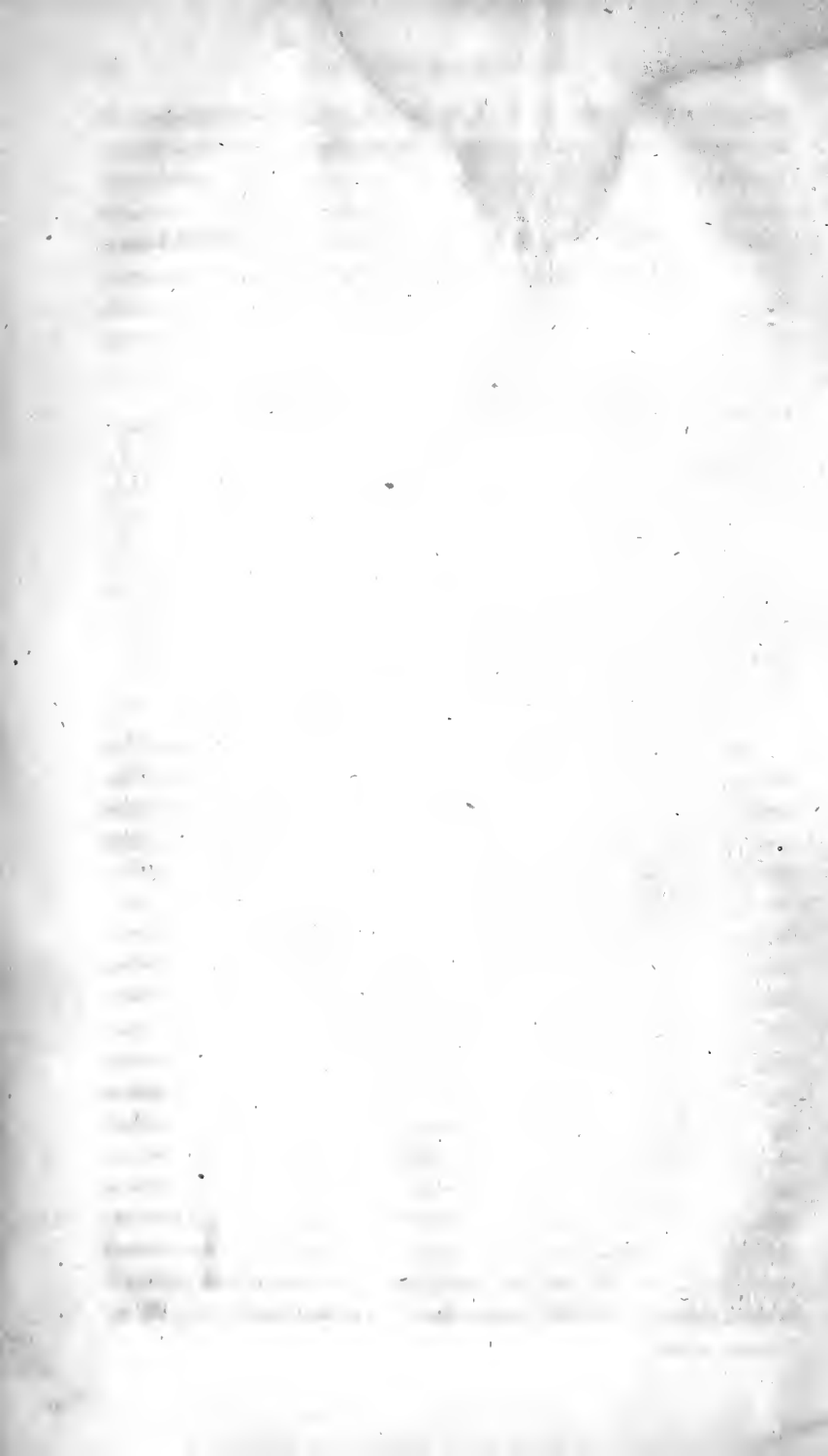
Let me hope, that the exertions I have made in the service of my Maker may redound to diffuse the knowledge of his commandments among our people, and to contribute to cement stronger the bond that unites us in our captivity; and that my humble striving may be viewed in favour by Him who is the Lord and the Creator of the universe.

Philadelphia, { Tebeth 29th, 5597.  
                  { January 6th, 1837.

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DISCOURSES,  
ARGUMENTATIVE AND DEVOTIONAL,  
ON THE  
JEWISH RELIGION.

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DISCOURSE I.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

BRETHREN OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!

IT is with extreme reluctance, founded upon a knowledge of my inability to advance any thing which may be generally interesting, that I now, for the first time, venture to address you. I feel too little confidence in my attainments (and I hope that no one will accuse me of affectation for so saying) even to imagine that I could do justice to our holy religion by any thing I am going to say. Before I begin, therefore, I am constrained to tell you, that only in obedience to the repeated solicitations of persons who really feel an interest in the welfare of our nation, I persuaded myself to attempt teaching that, which I deem to be the essential parts of our faith. After this candid avowal, I trust, that you will pardon any defect which you may discover, and be a little indulgent to my first effort at public speaking. It is highly probable, that most of you, if not all, may have heard all which I can advance; but then I must beg of you to consider, that known truths may often be but faintly remembered, and that we may derive great and lasting benefits by having them presented to us in a light, in which perhaps we had never before viewed them. It is for

this reason expedient, that occasional lectures on religious subjects should be delivered in our Synagogues, although I cannot deny that many members, perhaps the greater number, of our society are sufficiently acquainted with their duties, and need not to be reminded of them by any preacher, however eloquent.—Having premised thus much, let us proceed to the consideration of the following verse, from the xxvth chapter of Isaiah :

ואמר ביום ההוא הנה אלהינו זה קוינו לו ויושיענו זה  
ה' קוינו לו נגילה ונשמחה בישועתו : ישע' כה' ט' :

“And it will be said on that day: Behold this is our God in whom we have trusted, and he will save us; this is the Lord in whom we have trusted, we will be glad and rejoiced in his salvation.” Isaiah xxv. 9.

God is great and mighty—nothing is too great for his power to accomplish—nothing is hidden from his searching view. For if we look around us and behold the stupendous works of creation ; when we see the regularity and order which reign in every thing ; and when we turn our view within ourselves, and consider the nature of the living soul which we feel to animate us : we must be convinced, that the One above is powerful beyond compare, and wise beyond all measure. And if we descend from a contemplation of the greatness of God, as displayed in his creation, and reflect with care and candour upon the individual fortune of every human being : we will discover, that his providence and goodness are no less displayed in the details of life, than his power and wisdom are shown in the structure of the universe.

Of this his superintending watchfulness over the individual happiness and lives of the children of man, Holy Writ furnishes us with many examples ; for there we find narrated, how He manifested his power in saving and assisting those worthy of being called his servants, those, who placed their trust in Him, their God and Redeemer, when they found themselves surrounded by difficulties, from which no human foresight could have guarded, from which no earthly means could extricate them. We there have, also, examples which prove, that they who relied on their own strength, or asked for and employed the aid of men, were unsuccessful in their endea-

vours, whilst the weaker, relying upon their Father above, were prosperous. This should teach us, that if we wish to receive the protection of God, we ought first to deserve it by placing an undivided confidence in his providence ; and we should never hesitate to do what our religion demands of us for fear of suffering worldly loss and inconvenience ; but we should consider that we never can ultimately lose if we are truly obedient to God ; that in his service we never will be allowed to suffer more than we are able to bear. We may be met by difficulties in our pursuit of righteousness, but it is our duty to remain unshaken ; we may have to suffer temporary loss, but we should not heed it. We may perchance, also, subject ourselves to the hatred of wicked men ; but we ought not to suffer the fear of the creature to overcome us in the service of the Creator. It should be enough for us, that we are doing our duty ; that we are obeying the will of our Father : and this consciousness will strengthen us to bear up against all worldly ills ; for animated by a true confidence in God we must feel, that He is mighty enough to repay us our losses—remunerate us for our toil—and protect us from any injury to which we may be exposed. If therefore we are truly impressed with the knowledge of the power and goodness of the Lord, we must be his willing servants, and practice that readily which we are taught by Him to call wise and good, independent of all considerations of personal gain or aggrandizement, unswayed by fear of loss or persecution.

But as it is undeniable, that we Israelites have at present no national government ; as our number is but small and unimportant when compared with the mass of mankind : the pursuit of our religion may appear unprofitable to many among the worldly-minded, since it can bring them no temporal advantages, for there are none in authority who may bestow on them offices of trust and profit for their attachment to the ancient faith ; and the system which we uphold makes often strong demand upon our personal convenience and upon the riches we may possess. Perhaps the strict observance of our law may prevent us from participating in the distribution of certain offices, the duties of which may compel us to transgress the divine precepts. Again, some one may be induced to plead

necessity as an excuse for not adhering very strictly to the religion of his forefathers ; and he may imagine to himself a sufficient number of excuses to lull his conscience to sleep, whilst he transgresses the commandments of his God. Nevertheless he will assert, that he is a good and truly religious man, since he observes what is commonly called the moral duties ; and he alleges that he fulfils every thing which God can in reason ask of him ; but he forgets in his self-gratulation, that interest alone, sordid meanness, groveling avarice, and a yielding to selfish desires are the true motives of his conduct. And can this be religion ? is this a display of pure faith ? an entire reliance on God's omnipotence ? No ! Let me tell him that he has not true religion in his heart,—that his soul has not the proper reverence of the Lord—that his confidence is not entire in the God who created him. And although it is natural that we should be startled at the sight of what are called necessities, and although we are very apt to view every obstacle as insurmountable, provided we can excuse ourselves thereby for not doing our duty : we cannot call ourselves good and religious, we cannot be said to confide in God, as long as we are deterred from obeying Him by the dread of evil we may have to suffer here, and withheld from engaging in his service by the sight of difficulties which we have to encounter ; for we are not then kindled by that devotion to the will of the Lord which will enable us to make personal sacrifices, and to submit to dangers in our endeavours to serve Him.

But, brethren, if interested motives tend so powerfully to weaken our confidence in God, there is yet another feeling, which may aptly be called *self-sufficiency*, against which we are to arm ourselves by every means of which we are masters, if we wish to lead a religious life. For there are many, who, inflated by success in their pursuits, are misled to esteem their strength as sufficient to enable them to combat every obstacle—to shield themselves against all vicissitudes—to break down all the barriers which may oppose their success ; and, therefore, rendered selfish and proud, they neglect to pay due deference to religious duties, and they seem to say by their conduct : “ We need not confide in a providential assistance, we desire not any protection and succour from God. Are not



our riches great? has not success uniformly attended our enterprises? and besides, were we punished when we disobeyed what the weaker and less enlightened part of mankind call the divine laws?" But be silent, presumptuous sinners; what are ye at best but men—weak, powerless, short-sighted mortals. Do but look at yourselves, all you who think so much of your own capacities—look at your beginning—what you were once—what you are now—and what will you be: and then boast, if you dare, of the strength of man! When you were born, you were too weak to take care of yourselves, and as helpless children you required the nursing hand of your parents. You then learned to walk; you were taught to lisp the names of father and mother; and how glad were those that watched your infancy of the first dawning of infantile strength and infantile intellect; and speak, could you then think of accomplishing those great designs which you now purpose? You next grew up apace—your minds were by degrees stored with knowledge; you were taught to reverence the name of God, and cheerfully you obeyed the mandates of your loving guardians; for your hearts were yet pure, and your innocence was not yet tainted by unholy passions; and the days of your youth were rich with all the pleasures, which that delightful age alone can bestow; but say, did you then nourish those views of ambition which now bend your spirits, which now make you the slaves of inordinate desires?—You reach the age of manhood—and you aim to grasp at every thing; nay, the world seems hardly large enough to afford you room for the exercise of your enterprise; but see you not often your best plans frustrated?—see you not often your strength fail, when you think you need but to stretch forth your hand to seize the long sought prize?—And do behold yon infirm old man; he is one that has seen pleasure—has enjoyed riches—was beloved by his family—respected and revered by all who knew him—persons approached him with awe as though he were a superior being:—but look at him now, how he totters along, his feet will barely carry him from the spot on which he happens to stand;—look at his dress, it is worn to rags;—look at his sunken eye bedimmed with sorrow;—and then tell me, what is human greatness, what is human glory! But few

days are yet the portion of this stricken old man, and soon he must go down to the chill, dark grave, and appear before the Supreme Judge of the universe, "where the poor and the rich are alike, and where the slave is free from his master."

This is human life—its origin, its fulness, and its close. What then hast thou mortal to boast of? Surely not riches, not worldly goods, which when obtained are fleeting, and soon lost, though obtained with great labour; but only the soul within thee, which feels, which thinks, which prompts thee to action; this is thy riches, thy portion, thy imperishable inheritance from thy God. And can she feel aught of delight at thy hoarded riches? can she feel pleasure because thou dwellest in a palace? can she be benefitted, when thou hast hundreds of menials that are ready at thy nod?—No, thou mistakest the truth; she feels no pleasure on account of thy wealth; she is only delighted when thou art good and virtuous, when thy confidence in God enables thee to be above mean desire and sordid avarice, and when thou art man enough to defy every obstacle which may oppose thee in the acquisition of virtue. For when our mortal career is closed, when the soul ascends to God, she needs no longer the blessings which this life can afford; and nothing but virtue and piety remain to her then from her sojournment on earth.

Our wise men illustrate this by the following parable: A certain man had three friends, to one of whom he was devotedly attached; to the second he was kind, but he did not esteem him by far as much as the first; to the third, however, he paid but little regard, and scarcely ever thought of him. It happened one day, that this man was suddenly summoned before the king; and not knowing the cause of the unexpected summons, or perhaps dreading to appear before the king without a powerful defender to assist him in case of necessity: he applied to the first of his friends, being sure, that he would not refuse him his countenance in the present emergency. The friend, however, did refuse, excusing himself, saying: "I really cannot go; I am so much occupied with my own concerns, that it is impossible for me to assist you now; besides this, I have no influence with the king."—He then went to the second, who answered: "I can do but little for you; but as we have been

friends so long, I will accompany you as far as the palace-gate, more than that I cannot do.”—Finding himself so rudely treated by his most intimate friends, he applied to the last, whom he had so long neglected. This one, who in fact had always loved him more than either of the others, received him with open arms, saying: “How glad I am, my dear friend, that you have given me this opportunity of serving you; I will go with you to the king, I will remain with you, and defend you if necessary.”

The moral of the foregoing is, that a man generally values his riches more than his relatives and friends, and these again more than his religion, which is, alas! like the last friend in the parable, too often neglected and almost forgotten. He is finally summoned to appear before the King of kings, the Holy One, praised be He; his money avails him nothing; this must be left behind; his relatives and friends accompany him to the grave, there *they* must leave him; and thus his virtues and good deeds alone remain with him, to go with him to the tribunal of the Judge of all to defend him and to plead in his favour.—Why then should we turn our whole attention to the acquisition of wealth,—why should we be so sedulous to make friends—when these riches, and these friends, are eventually of so little real benefit to us? In saying this, I must not be misunderstood as inculcating, that it is wrong to endeavour to become rich, or to acquire friends; for my intention only is to impress your minds with the folly of continually searching for wealth, of that anxious solicitude to have a large number of admirers, and thereby neglecting the more necessary duties, which are, the perfecting of yourselves in the fear of the Lord and the love towards man. In a word, the possession of riches should be the secondary object, the possession of virtue however the chief, as it is the true, aim of life.

It may indeed happen, that persons less religious, less moral, less beloved, than yourselves may possess a larger portion of worldly blessings; but can this be an excuse for you to follow their example? Do you not know: “That only a short time elapses, and the wicked is gone, and you search his place carefully, and he is no more?”—Perhaps you may never live to see the punishment of the man, whom you think yourselves justified in calling wicked; but reflect, that it is not for you to

determine, who is guilty, or who is innocent; there is one Judge, who searches the heart, He knows the true desires of each man's spirit; and many a one, whom you think very bad, may have hidden virtues, and many an outwardly pious man may be actuated by wicked motives. It is in fact the perfection of our confidence in God, that we never find fault with his dispensations, and that we always cheerfully acquiesce in his decisions, be they for us or against us. Even if we should be conscious, that we have done nothing to deserve misfortune, (yet where is that man who never sinneth?) we ought, nevertheless, to submit patiently to the dispensation of Heaven, and resign ourselves to his decree, since it is perhaps the rod held over us, which prevents us from following in the paths of sinners. For it may be known to the Infinite Wisdom, that prosperity would make us forgetful of his will, that elated with success we might ascribe this success to our own strength, and forget, "that it is He alone who enables us to acquire wealth." And is it then not better for our everlasting happiness, that we remain, whilst in this world, in humble circumstances? Every one of you can answer this question for himself, for it needs not my admonition to convince you, that *eternity* ought to be more regarded than *evanescent time*.

If, therefore, we should be overtaken by misfortunes, if we even see our fondest hopes blighted, if those we love most are torn from our embrace in the prime of youthful life: we should reflect, that He who has wounded us, can also apply the healing balsam to the wound, and that He never punishes a man beyond his strength of enduring. And if we are destined to suffer much, we shall have an equal share of firmness to suffer with patience and resignation, and thus must the evil even tend to fortify us more strongly in the fear of God, and in the confidence we should feel in Him; and unhappiness, therefore, which lasts but a short time, may be the cause of permanent happiness and undying bliss.

If thus an individual is to feel an unwavering, filial, confidence in his Creator, it becomes no less obligatory upon Jews, as a nation, to trust unshrinkingly, without murmuring, without searching in the decrees of his unsearchable wisdom, in the God of our fathers, who has sustained us through so many ages of persecution and oppression. For if we ask: "Why are we

to suffer so much more than any other people?" we should answer ourselves, that we are punished for our manifold transgressions; for our having broken the covenant which the Lord made with us; for our having been disunited among ourselves, and for being even at this very moment still unworthy of the great and glorious happiness promised to us through the mouth of nearly all the prophets. It therefore came to pass, that, as the prophet says: "God was *as* an enemy towards us;" He punished us severely, as though He were an enemy, as though He despised Israel; but in reality only to make us feel the great burden of our sins, to awaken us to a consideration of our fallen moral state, and to induce us thereby to mend our ways, and to return to Him, the Lord, whom we have forsaken. The refiner melts not the gold to destroy it, but to purify it from the admixture of impure matter. Just so is the long captivity of the Israelites to be regarded—as a process by which the Eternal One endeavours to purify us from sin; to restore us at the last to our land cleansed from our transgressions; and to cause our virtue to shine with a tenfold greater lustre, than it ever has done, since we received the law from Sinai. We ought, therefore, to confide truly in God, and always look forward with an unshaken and undiminished hope to our restoration to the land of Israel, and to abide faithful to the covenant which God made with our ancestors, undeterred by the hatred and persecution of the gentiles. And if we have always done this, we may then say, "on that day (when God has restored us): Behold this is our God in whom we have trusted, and He will save us; this is the Lord in whom we have trusted, and we will be glad and rejoiced through his salvation."

May the Lord then have mercy on us all, and bring back the captives of his people, who confide in Him and await his salvation. May He bless us all and preserve us; may He let his countenance shine unto us, and be gracious to us; may He lift up his countenance unto us and grant us peace, at this time, and give us everlasting rest from all oppression, and security from war and desolation in our own land at the coming of his anointed one, the son of David! Amen.

Sivan 10th. }  
June 2d. } 5590.

## DISCOURSE II.

## WANT OF FAITH.

CREATOR of all, Thou, whose glory fills the world, we adore Thee and confide in thee, because of thy goodness. We humbly approach thy sanctuary and ask thy protection. O grant us prosperity, and relieve us from all affliction; and if we even be not worthy of thy bounties, do Thou show us thy mercies for the sake of thy holy name, by which we are called. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

When I addressed you last, I endeavoured to point out the necessity of confiding in God in all our transactions. If we now come to examine the nature of this confiding more closely, it will become evident, that this virtue is the parent of all other virtues, whereas the want of it will expose us to the commission of all kinds of sin. The man, who truly confides in God, will need no other incentive to the practice of religious duties, for he will say on every occasion: "It is my God who demands the observance of this duty from me, it is my Creator, who forbids the perpetration of this act; and as He asks nothing, which is beyond my strength to accomplish, and as He desires my happiness only: common feelings of gratitude compel me to obey his precepts." But what can the wavering man oppose to his passions? He loves not his maker?—his God is to him as an unknown stranger, and the precepts of the law, if observed at all, are viewed as a task, a burden almost too heavy to be borne. An opportunity of sinning is offered to him, his passions are roused, the fear of God raises but a feeble voice of warning within his bosom; and he falls—yes, falls deeper, than he had any reason even to expect in the first instance of his yielding to his inclinations. For the path of virtue is a slippery ascent, the summit of which can be reached only by unremitting toiling and untiring vigilance; but wo to us, if we confide not strongly in Him, who calls encouragingly down to

us from the highest point of elevation, to despise danger and ascend fearlessly; for if his voice remains unheeded, and we give way to our natural apprehensions, we lose our footing and glide down unawares, and if we cannot catch at an impending bough or a prominent crag in our descent, we must reach, alas, too soon! the very bottom of the hill, and thus (to drop the metaphor) instead of being virtuous, as we had intended to be, we become depraved sinners—solely, because we were too indolent, too confiding in our own abilities, to overcome the desires of a passion, or the impulse of some unhallowed feeling, when it was yet time to save us, when a slight exertion of confidence in the divine guidance might yet have shielded us against all attacks of selfishness, of avarice, and of pride.

And how often have we not all been the sorrowful witnesses of the fatal effects of such a want of faith, as just described. Many there were, who in the outset of their irreligious career transgressed but in some small, immaterial, as they thought, ceremonial duty, they sipped, as it were, but slightly of the poisonous bowl; but point by point the duties of revelation were all neglected, till the sinners themselves were astonished at the distance which separated them from their God. Perhaps the first step was the partaking of the food which the law forbids to the sons of Israel; then the holy day of the Lord was neglected; anon a daughter of the stranger was chosen the companion of a descendant of Abraham, and an abjuration of the religion promulgated by Moses completed at length the circle of transgressions against the will of our Maker. And all this was caused, by the want of a singleness of faith, by the absence of an entire filial reliance on the goodness and truth of God; for if a man does truly confide and believe, he will have a great protection against sin, and if he in an evil hour should transgress, he will hasten with contrition and sorrow to seek the forgiveness of the Omniscent One for the wrong he has done, and endeavour to deserve pardon and mercy by a more careful regard to the duties incumbent on him. But where faith is wanting, where confidence does not dwell triumphant in the soul, the passions can reign unrestrained; and when sin has once got a hold of such a heart, the course of apostacy will be pursued perhaps to destruction; and it often

happens, that so strong are the bonds of wickedness, so powerful the charms of ungodliness, that the sinner perishes without atoning for his misdeeds, without an endeavour to appease the Creator, whose holy spirit he has vexed by his iniquity.

This is the fruit of want of confidence in individuals; but nations also may be exposed to the same cause of sin, and whole communities may be lost by not guarding themselves carefully against the attacks of pusillanimousness on the one side, and pride and arrogance on the other. A most striking example, one which is no doubt familiar to you all, is given to us in the portion of the Law, which we read this morning.—The Israelites had been redeemed from Egypt in a miraculous manner, and had received the law from Sinai, as a guide for them in all the transactions of life. They had also been promised, that they should inherit the land of Canaan, now known as Palestine. They were on their journey to this delightful country, under the guidance of the great Moses, who had been the instrument in the hand of God, of affecting their deliverance. They ought, therefore, to have had confidence enough in the Power, who had protected them thus far, to advance boldly, without regarding any impediment which might oppose them. But no, they required that spies should be sent out, who were to report to them the nature of the country, so that they might be enabled “to know the road they were to go, and the cities they should come to.” (Deut. i. 22.) Now mark the consequence. If the Israelites had firmly relied on God’s assistance, and had fearlessly advanced to the conquest of the holy land, the very persons, who had been redeemed from Egyptian bondage, would also have been permitted to enjoy in Palestine all the comforts which freemen feel in their own land. But owing to their fear of what might occur to them in their expedition, they demanded having some previous knowledge of the country. But as this desire was not absolutely sinful, since we should at all times apply natural means to obtain natural ends, and as spies are always employed to obtain all the information of localities and peculiar features of a country to be invaded which can be useful to the invaders: Moses received the sanction of God to send twelve men, one from each tribe, who should be chiefs in their own divisions. To these Moses gave particular direc-



tions, and requested them to be very circumstantial in their report. After spending forty days in the survey of Palestine, they returned to the assembled congregation, and ten out of the twelve magnified existing dangers, and invented others which existed only in their imagination. This was enough for the wavering multitude. They had now, as they thought, sufficient foundation for their previously entertained fears; they rose in tumult against the messenger of God, and complained bitterly of their fate, in being destined, together with their wives and children, to fall by the sword of the enemy, and they even discussed the propriety of appointing a chief, who should lead them back to Egypt, where they had been held as slaves, cruelly beaten, and their children murdered. All gratitude to Moses, all trust in the magnanimous chief, were suddenly dissipated, and they painted him in their fancy as an artful deceiver, who had only freed them from one danger, to make them perish by the sword of the lawless freebooters of the desert, and the fierce population of a well-fortified country. This, indeed, was rebellion against the Almighty, when men, who had so largely partaken of his bounty, could think of rejecting the leaders whom He had appointed for them, and talk of returning to the land of a tyrant, from whose grasp his almighty power had but so lately saved them. Moses and his faithful brother were sorely grieved,—they felt their inability of stemming the powerful opposition,—they were shocked at the folly and wickedness of a people for whom they had done so much already, and were willing to do even more; and they fell upon their faces before the whole congregation, imagining perhaps, that these might be restored to a proper mode of thinking, at seeing their formerly trusted leaders prostrate before them in the dust. But although the multitude had thus shown how little faith was in them, there were still remaining two fearless men, who never had for a moment lost their firm conviction of the power of the Lord, and their confidence in his providence. These were the renowned champions of our nation, Joshua and Caleb; who with their garments rent, in order to prove how deeply they mourned for the unfortunate and wicked crowd, stepped forward from amidst the uproar and confusion, endeavouring to appease the tumult and rebellion, and thus they spoke (Numb. xiv. 7-9):

הארץ אשר עברנו בה לתור אתה טובה הארץ מאד  
 מאד : גם חפץ בנו ה' והביא אתנו אל הארץ הזאת  
 ונתנה לנו ארץ אשר הוא זבת חלב ודבש : אך בה' אל  
 תמרדו ואתם אל תיראו את עם הארץ כי לחמנו הם סר  
 צלם מעליהם וה' אתנו אל תיראם : במד' יד' ז' :

“The land through which we have passed, to survey it, this land is very good. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will bring us unto this land, and give it to us, a land, which overflows with milk and honey. Only act not rebelliously against the Lord, and then you need not fear the people of the land, for they are our bread (*i. e.* we can easily overcome them); their shadow (God's protection) has departed from them, whilst the Lord is with us; be you therefore not afraid of them.”

You will observe, brethren, that in this address Joshua and Caleb wished to upbraid the people for their want of confidence in God. They, therefore, placed the land which they had visited in a prominent light before them, and painted it as a country which they ought to desire to possess, as a gift worthy to be conferred by God on his people. They then continued by observing, that this great prize might readily be obtained, if they would but deserve his favour, by obeying his will; for in this case, he would surrender the powerful and armed inhabitants into their hands, although they were as yet unused to war. But they, who had acted rebelliously towards God, and ungratefully towards his chosen messenger, would not listen to the wholesome admonitions of these two pious men, nay—they even threatened, in their rage, to sacrifice them to their resentment. But, see! the glory of God was suddenly revealed to the sinful and sinless ones, and the arms of the rebels were paralyzed, whilst the firm adherents of God were inspired with new confidence. Many times before this, the descent of the divine revelation had been a sign of redemption and grace to the Israelites; but now, on the contrary, the spirit of prophecy was revealed to Moses to announce the impending doom and suffering of the hitherto beloved people of God. The judgment indeed was severe; but their offence had also been great, and their desire to add murder to rebellion called loudly for vengeance. And thus spoke the Most High to Moses:

“How long will this people incense me, and how long will they not believe in me, despite of all the wonders which I have done in the midst of them. I will smite them with a pestilence and extirpate them, and make thee (Moses) a people greater and stronger than they are.”

We find here, that God spoke, as though he wished to exterminate the whole race of Israelites for their want of reliance upon his protection, because of their unbelief.—Let us pause here, and view the good leader, (who had been selected from the whole nation as their mediator with God,) standing before the Almighty, and praying for the ungrateful people, who had but just attempted to slay those who had remained friendly to him. He recounted the miracles which God had displayed amongst Israel, and continued; “And now, I pray thee, to let thy great power be displayed, O Lord! as Thou hast spoken, saying: The Lord withholdeth his anger long, is full of kindness, pardoneth sin and transgression, but suffereth nothing to go unpunished; who visiteth the sin of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and the fourth generation. O pardon Thou the sin of this people, according to thy great kindness, and as Thou hast also been indulgent to this people from Egypt to this place.” Moses, as will be seen, expressed in this prayer his wish, that the punishment of Israel might be averted, that they might live and reform their ways, so as again to deserve a renewal of God’s favour. And great, indeed, is the goodness of God, and infinite are his mercies! and He answered: כְּלַחֶה כְּרַבְרַךְ “I pardon according to thy word.” In this emphatic expression of Holy Writ—more beautiful by far than tongue can express—was announced the salvation of the Israelitish people, and the decree of their extermination revoked; and those only, who had at that time reached the age of twenty years, and who had all been guilty of rebellion, were doomed to perish in the wilderness, that they might experience the dreadful consequences, which must ensue, when God withdraws his favour from man. For forty years they thus wandered about in the trackless wilderness, and by degrees all perished, against whom the decree had gone forth. But even from this generation the manifest providence of God was not withheld. Food was provided for them in plenty, their

garments did not wear off from their bodies, nor their sandals from their feet, and in the most barren soil, water was always ready for them to refresh their parched lips, when they were almost sinking beneath the scorching heat of a cloudless sun. Thus they performed their pilgrimage from station to station, under the *doom* and under the *protection* of Heaven; their children grew up to manhood, and the matrons of Yeshurun, saw a new race springing up around them, a race, pure from foreign admixture—reared under the wise counsel and wholesome instruction of the father of the prophets—and destined by the will of the All-seeing One to inherit that land, which their fathers had forfeited by their repeated acts of rebellion.

In the foregoing remarks, I have endeavoured to sketch, in a few words, an imperfect picture of a part of the history of our people; an elaborate exhibition thereof would be needless, since the words of Scripture, the portion, namely, which we read to-day, are so sublime, that nothing is left to be added to an account so perfect in every respect. It only therefore remains for me to draw your attention to the cause of this defection and this punishment. Many, no doubt, among you, will pass unqualified censure upon the conduct of our ancestors; they will probably imagine, that they would not have acted so under any circumstances. Now it is perfectly correct, that you should heartily condemn that which met the disapprobation and chastisement of our heavenly Father; but do not therefore, triumphing in the consciousness of your innocence, look back with contempt upon your misguided forefathers. Let rather the example of their sin be a warning to you all; an example, recorded by the inspired historian, to teach you a useful lesson of morality, and it is your duty to reflect carefully upon the causes which proved their ruin, that you may endeavour to escape the snare which caused their fall. Our ancestors transgressed, because they had no firm faith in God; and so may every one of us sin, if he does not carefully guard himself by faith and confidence in the Supreme, at the very outset of life. For only in case we commence our career with a pious resolution of being religious, only if we on every occasion place the sincerest confidence in the goodness of our Father: we have some reason to hope that we may, like Joshua and Caleb, remain

firm and true to the cause of religion, even when all around us swerve from the way of righteousness ; and only by a meek resignation to God's decrees, free from an overweening pride, which would prompt us to display our piety to the world in order to show how much better we are than others, can we hope to be rewarded with the peculiar favour of God, as were these two pious men, whose history we have read in this day's portion.—But if, on the other hand, we commence in early youth a life of dissipation, push the admonitions of conscience with both hands, as it were, from us ; if the laxity of our religious hope does not enable us to resist temptations, and to disregard the slight obstacles which every now and then must oppose themselves to our religious improvement, how can we expect to perform well our part during a long course of life, where we may have to encounter opposition not yet thought of even?—Let me therefore admonish you, my brethren, to watch over yourselves with a careful eye, even at the outset of life ; to excuse none of your faults and follies to yourselves ; but to let it be your constant endeavour to trace every one of your actions to the secret source whence it springs ; to look always upon the Deity as your support in all difficulties, and to his presence as your destined home.—If you do this, you may fearlessly enter life with a joyous heart ; your travelling upon the road of earthly existence will then bring you nearer, step by step, to the desired summit ; and the little obstacles you may meet with on the way, the slight shocks you may receive whilst pursuing your journey will make you more circumspect, and render your next step always surer. Thus you will live as pious men—thus you, daughters of Zion, will be the joy of your fathers, the delight of your husbands, and a blessing to your children ;—and thus we all may, after a well-spent life, hope to enter the presence of our God in purity and innocence, there to enjoy the delights at his right hand for ever. Amen.

Sivan 25th. }  
 June 16th. } 5590.

## DISCOURSE III.

## P I O U S   E N E R G Y .

To the Almighty Father, who made his covenant with Abraham, renewed his oath to Isaac, and confirmed his promise to Jacob, and who chose our ancestors to be his people, be praise and glory for everlasting. Amen.

## B R E T H R E N !

In all things which a man undertakes, a certain degree of activity, promptness, and decision is necessary, without which the best laid plans must be unsuccessful. The merchant thus in the pursuit of his business, always endeavours to secure to himself the earliest custom, and is even apprehensive, lest another should forestall him in a certain transaction, or altogether prevent him from participating therein.—The mechanic tries to finish his wares in due time, that he may be enabled to meet the expected demand as early as any other of his craft, and in order to draw upon himself a great share of public attention, he strives to improve upon former models, and invent new and useful things.—The man of learning in his endeavours to push himself forward, employs all his energy to claim a share of public patronage, and is always solicitous that no one shall despoil him of the honours, which he conceives to be his due.—The soldier, who is entrusted with the command of an army, is ever on the alert to discover where and when he can strike a decisive blow; and he would think himself highly blameworthy, were he to suffer himself to be anticipated, or to be taken by surprise by the enemy. All the classes of men just enumerated, and all others engaged in various other pursuits, think themselves bound to aim at being successful in their respective stations, and they accordingly regard not any labour as too great, nor any exertion as too troublesome, which may promote their several objects.—We thus see, that in all concerns of life, where worldly success is the goal, and the dis-

tion for riches, skill, fame, and bravery the stake, the desired end will stimulate man to do all he can to deserve and ensure their fortunate consummation.

But if we take a calm view of all earthly blessings, of whatever may be apportioned to us here, we must inevitably be struck with their uncertainty of duration, and the small share of real enjoyment they can afford, even if possessed in their fullest extent. If then the acquisition of *these* demands so much perseverance and application, how much more do those things deserve this ardour in searching, the possession of which is permanent, and which afford us imperishable enjoyment? I allude, as you no doubt know already, to the acquisition of pious feelings and the practice of virtuous deeds; since these are they, which confer upon us, in whatever part of the world, in whatever state of life we may be, the most lasting and unalloyed enjoyment; for piety will solace the mind even in affliction, and the consciousness of having done our duty, and of having accumulated a stock of virtuous deeds, will at all times give us a sincere pleasure—a pleasure unmixed by regret or compunctions of conscience. But to acquire virtue we must also make great exertions; for if we remain inactive in this pursuit, if we should be careless of what means we employ, or fearful of outward circumstances, we can never become virtuous; for know! that unless we strain every nerve to conquer our sinful propensities, we can never hope of being ultimately that, for which the Lord of all has destined us. Because there is so much to distract our attention, so many circumstances calculated to lead us, if I may use the expression, into the by-paths of religion, that a constant vigilance, and withal an anxious and oft-repeated examination of ourselves become absolutely necessary to preserve us pure whilst we are yet innocent, or to restore us to the love of our God, if we have once strayed from the road which He has marked out to us as the way of everlasting life and happiness. But if we allow ourselves to be called away by outward circumstances, be they those of fancied necessity or inviting pleasure, if we, even for a brief space of time, actually cease to watch our desires and to combat our passions: we must sin from mere thoughtlessness, and we may thus become gradually depraved and be led

into the depth of wickedness, without even heeding that we are treading the path of death.

But, independently of carelessness, there is another fruitful cause of transgression—the fear of ridicule, namely, which is apt to exercise, alas ! a very baneful influence over the opinions of many, who are not yet initiated in vice, nor firmly established in piety. There is a considerable number of men, even among those endowed with a high degree of intellect, who are always afraid of incurring the ridicule of those they are placed amongst, and they will accordingly omit doing many things for fear of this ridicule of their associates. This is chiefly the case with young persons that associate with those of their own age, who are heedless and extravagant, and, as they call it themselves, gay and cheerful. But this gaiety and this cheerfulness are not of that harmless kind which is the offspring of conscious innocence ; but consist of a certain indulgence in dissipation and an occasional deviation from religious duties, which these gay young persons often permit themselves under the excuse : “ It is time enough to grow more serious when we grow older.” A timid person coming in contact with such society is very apt to be withheld from pursuing the virtuous bend of his own inclinations, and is often induced to take part in their dissipation solely from fear of being called by them a dull fellow, or an unsociable being; and, therefore, the want of *moral* courage may be the cause of his becoming every hour more withdrawn from the path of righteousness, and of being numbered at the last amongst the dissolute and worthless, whose only aim is to live for the gratification of their passions, and who pride themselves at not being checked in their downward course by those little restraints which the religious part of mankind willingly impose upon their desires.—Having premised thus much, let us next proceed to the consideration of the following, from the fifth chapter of the Proverbs of the Fathers :

יהודה בן תימא אומר · הוי עז כנמר · וקל כנשר · וריץ  
כצבי · וגבור כארי · לעשות רצון אביך שבשמים : אבות ה'

“ Yehudah son of Thaymah said: Be as bold as the tiger, fleet as the eagle, swift as the deer, and strong as the lion, to do the will of thy Father that is in heaven.”



To explain the intent of this sage advice, let us investigate briefly the causes which withhold many persons from the practice of virtue. Some are *afraid* to act according to their own conviction; they fancy that they will expose themselves to the hatred of their powerful irreligious neighbours; or they expect to derive a benefit from some one if they agree with him in outward conformity to certain rites and ceremonies; or as said already, they fear to encounter the ridicule of the thoughtless; and from one or all of these circumstances combined they practise the evil, not perhaps from any love of sin itself, but from mere faintheartedness or motives of interest, their moral courage not being strong enough to enable them to combat the misgivings of fear, or the cravings of worldly gain. To men like these the moralist says: "Be as bold as the tiger to do the will of thy Father in heaven!" regard not the hatred of the powerful, despise the sneers of the godless, turn a deaf ear to the inducements which strangers to God's worship and seducers may hold out, and defy all boldly, as the tiger defies the attacks of all other animals, and only obey the will of your Father that is in heaven. Let his fear always be upon you; and reflect that his power is greater by far than that of the most powerful man. Why then should you fear mortals more? Consider that He takes no frivolous excuses as a justification of your follies. Why then should the laughter of foolish sinners withdraw you from this service? Know also, that this bounty and beneficence are as unlimited as his power. Why then should hopes of gain or the expectation of being actually paid for apostacy, be any inducement to you to neglect your duties, and prevent you from following the divine precepts, which were given to promote your own happiness?

There is another class of men whose delight is to see every thing, and whose curiosity prompts them to investigate every transaction of life, and to study every kind of society: they think it will improve them, and give them a knowledge of character, and an insight into the motives and doings of men. And really it must be confessed, that such a curiosity, when properly exercised, must give a knowledge of human nature both necessary and agreeable, which can hardly be obtained in any other way than by actual personal observation. Still if it

is not properly controlled, it has also a great disadvantage, as it is apt to make us familiar with vice ; for if we are indiscriminately curious, we may be led to seek *bad* society, in order to understand *that* also thoroughly, and to know whatever is committed there. But it must be remembered, that if we enter the company of the wicked, and repeat our visits often, we are very apt to lose the horror we at first felt for the follies we see practised there : we become, as it were, enamoured of what we once so thoroughly detested, and we fall by degrees into the pit, which we approached merely from idle curiosity, and which we might have easily avoided if we had but kept in the right way, regardless of its existence. Again, some belonging to this class make a trial of vice from mere curiosity, imagining, that it will be easy for them to leave off whenever they may feel inclined ; but they forget that vice lays hold of a man's mind, blinds his understanding and warps his judgment, and that it does require the greatest exertions to throw off evil habits when once contracted ; and they do not reflect, that evil habits are soon contracted, and that one sin is generally the forerunner of another. Some also think that they may safely skim lightly over the surface of sin ; that they may with impunity be guilty of the lesser moral offences : but they are like those that play carelessly at the edge of some frightful precipice, heedless of danger ; yet suddenly their head becomes giddy, their sight fails, and they fall unresistingly almost into the jaws of destruction. This precisely is the case of those, who think themselves secure in the habitual commission of some small errors, and believe themselves not guilty of any crime by so doing ; but suddenly, perhaps, unconsciously to themselves, they may plunge into real vice ; when nothing can save them but a speedy repentance ; which, however distasteful to their self-love, must be vigorously pursued, if they at all desire to recover their lost innocence. Rabbi Yehudah therefore advises all men : " Be as fleet as the eagle to do the will of thy Father in heaven ! " meaning, be particularly watchful over your conduct, direct an eagle's gaze upon all your doings and the conduct of those around you ; and be as fleet to escape from every vice, as the eagle is to escape from the arrow of the bowman, who threatens to take his life ; and rest not in your upward career,

till you have reached an elevation whence you can look down with the utmost safety upon all on earth, which then will appear little and unimportant at the immeasurable distance beneath you; just as every thing must appear to the eagle, when he has winged his proud way far above the clouds of the firmament.

A third class of persons may be denominated the indifferent or the careless; they are not actually bad-hearted or badly inclined, but indifferent about the practice of virtue; and when they are invited to co-operate in any act of benevolence, their uniform excuse is: "What business is this of mine?" They see a poor man begging in the street, they pass by him unconcerned, for they argue: "I need not trouble myself about this beggar, he is nothing to me." They are even asked for charity; but their gift is accompanied with some chilling remark to the poor mendicant, and they perhaps suffer their callousness to overcome their good feelings so far, as to tell a crippled, unfortunate old man: "You had better try to obtain some work to maintain yourself, without troubling others about your wants." The house of God is opened, and many flock thither to offer up their prayers to their heavenly Protector; but the indifferent man cannot think of doing likewise, for as yet he is not convinced that this is his business. To all such persons the advice is given: "Be as swift as the deer to do the will of thy Father in heaven!" just as the panting deer flies to the running brook to cool his burning thirst; thus do you also fly to the observance of the divine precepts, and endeavour to convince yourselves that it is your business, nay the chief business of your life, to do whatever religion demands of you. "If you see the naked, cover him; and does the hungry meet you, give him food;" when you see the house of God open enter there, and let your sincere and heartfelt prayer rise up as an acceptable offering to your heavenly Father, to whom a contrite heart is the most grateful sacrifice. Endeavour to associate yourselves with your brethren in every social and religious act; and the pleasure which such conduct will afford you, must make virtue in a very short time so indispensable to you, that you will pant for an opportunity to show your love to God, like the "deer thirsteth for the water of the living fountain."

There is yet another class of persons, who, with the best disposition to practise the good, and who are even not indifferent to good actions, are yet too indolent to attempt doing what their sense of justice demands; because it would not cost them too much labour, or because it might perhaps interfere with their personal ease. They are, therefore, continually praising the good they see done by others, but are themselves always absent, whenever any thing demands their own aid. Yet positive sin, as well as negative evil, may be the result of this want of activity. For the indolent man may be placed in a society, where many are found who habitually deviate from the commandments of our holy religion; he sees their conduct, and perhaps detests it at first; but he does not take the requisite trouble to prevent the evil example having a bad effect upon himself. And as it is so very easy to do as others do, but so hard to make a stand where one may be left to act by himself alone, a man of the kind we are describing, may be misled by the example set before him, and induced to sin likewise, merely because he cannot rouse himself to an increased degree of activity, when this very activity is the only means to preserve him in the path of religion. So too, he may hear of a distressed family, and even may feel deeply for their condition; but he cannot think of going immediately to their relief, for, again, it would be too much trouble; "It rains to-day," will perhaps be his excuse, "to-morrow, perchance, it may be clear, one day can make no difference, and it will then be time enough to look after them; I am almost certain their distress has been represented to me in exaggerated colours;" but in the mean time the poor may starve from want of food, the sick may die from want of proper assistance, and the tardy charity come thus too late.—But if tardiness should even not have such terrible consequences, we nevertheless can perceive its *vexatious* effects in every day's occurrences; for the hour of worship arrives, but the indolent has time enough yet to wait, and he appears at the house of prayer, when the service is nearly over. At funerals he arrives, when his assistance is no longer wanted; and so in fact it happens, that at every religious meeting he is entirely useless, because he is always too late; and on occasions when activity is required to effect some good

purpose, his aid is never desired, for the general good cause gains nothing by his accession.—We are, therefore, admonished: “Be as strong as the lion to do the will of thy Father in heaven!” let religion at all times be of sufficient importance to you, to induce you to employ all your mental and bodily resources in its service. If your assistance be wanted, do not wait to be driven or even begged to give it, but offer it cheerfully and willingly, and reflect that, by the practice of every good deed, you are laying up a treasure for yourselves in heaven. Nor should you halt in your career to perfection, or felicitate yourselves at having accomplished enough; but rather consider that all, which you can do, must yet leave a great deal undone, and despite all your exertions, you will hardly arrive at that state of perfection, where you could say, with truth, we have finished our task to the entire satisfaction of our Maker. The lion, when in pursuit of prey, stops not in the midst of his course with his appetite unappeased, nor does he rest satisfied with the mere view of his victim; but he continues onward the chase, and loses not sight of his purpose, till he has succeeded, or till prevented by insurmountable difficulties.—Just so should it be with you in the pursuit of virtue; endeavour to become as good as the best of men, let this be the object of your dearest desires, and pursue this high aim of virtuous ambition with all the diligence, with all the energy, with all the perseverance you are capable of;—be avaricious in hoarding up everlasting treasures, dissipate none of your accumulated store of virtues, and guard these priceless treasures with as much fierceness as the lion guards his spoil; and like this noble animal, regard as your bitterest enemy, the one that attempts to rob you of the smallest portion of your holy gains. Neither suffer your hold to relax for one moment; for once become careless about them, once suffer yourselves to think that any thing can be more precious: and it is an easy matter to rob you of that which cost so much labour to obtain; as even the prowling jackal can take away the lion’s prey, when he carelessly leaves the fruit of his arduous labour unguarded, through drowsiness or negligence.—In short, if you are diligent in the amassing of wealth; if you are industrious in finishing a piece of handiwork in due season; if you are careful in acquiring fame;

if you are cautious in warding off attacks against your body: be doubly diligent in enriching your soul with virtuous deeds; be doubly industrious in the fulfilment of your duties; be doubly careful in guarding your religious standing; and be most of all cautious in warding off all attacks upon your everlasting peace, which interest, covetousness, or bad example can make; and rest satisfied with the assurance, that this striving will bring its own reward, since the ease of mind which the truly pious man feels even amidst the most dreadful sufferings, is far more en-  
viable than the pleasures which the most wealthy can purchase with all his wealth in the full tide of his success.—Perhaps you may live in straitened circumstances; perhaps the world may not smile upon you; perhaps you may remain unjustly neglected; but despite of all this, there is nothing that can deprive you of your spiritual riches, nothing that can extinguish the light within you, and no human being, nay, not the whole world, can rob you of the blessing of your God, which will, and must be yours at last, if you render yourselves worthy of it in this life of probation.

May our actions be always found just before the Lord of the universe, and may we all live so, that we can appear before his tribunal in spotless innocence; and may this be the cause of our enjoying that felicity which He has prepared for those who fear Him! Amen.

Tamuz 10th. }  
July 1st.     } 5590.

## DISCOURSE IV.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

O THOU, who comfortest the mourners, and assistest them that are afflicted, look down, we pray Thee, upon the humble remnant of thy people, Israel, who stand this day before thy holy shrine and supplicate thy protection. Grant us thy assistance, and preserve us as a peculiar people amongst the nations of the earth; cause us to live undisturbed by those who surround us, so that we may be enabled to live conformably to thy will, which Thou hast expressed to us through thy servant Moses! Amen.

## BRETHREN!

As a part of the once great nation, of that people, designated as the peculiar treasure of the Most High, we are soon to be assembled at the house of God, to mourn for the downfall of our national glory. This is the season in which calamity after calamity burst over our heads, and this is the time of year in which the temple was twice destroyed. Once, we lived happily in the land of Israel,—once, we had a government instituted and favoured by the God of heaven and earth,—once, we had a temple in which we assembled three times every year, to worship our God, as one body,—once, we had priests to administer the duties of our religion before the altar of the Eternal:—but now—we are scattered over the whole face of God's earth—now, we are bound to obey laws which our religion does not recognize,—we are without a temple, and the priest of God no longer sacrifices at the altar, and the grateful smoke of incense no longer curls upward under the hand of the holy minister. All has been lost, the glory of Israel has departed, and the descendants of Jacob mourn in a far off land.—This is a brief, but true, sketch of the state of our people, who suffer all this, because they disobeyed the will of their God, who had proved so often his almighty power before them.—Nothing

therefore, should excite greater and more poignant regret within us, than the remembrance of what we were once, and the reflection of what we are now. Once the envy of all the surrounding nations—now an abhorrence to all beholders; once feared by the most powerful and warlike families of the East—now a weak remnant, left to the mercy of every oppressor; once living in a common land, speaking one language, and united by one beloved government—now scattered, speaking different tongues, and obeying the will and conforming to the caprice of every people of the world. Indeed, has Judah fallen, indeed is Israel sorely afflicted, because they incurred the wrath of Heaven. Do but compare the animating account which sacred history furnishes of the glorious epoch of our people in David's time, when the Syrians, Edumeans, Phœnicians, and the children of Lot, besides many other tribes, either succumbed to the arms of the anointed of the Lord, or propitiated his favour by presents and friendly alliances—with the woful catastrophe of the destruction of the holy city, when enemies, even the rudest and most barbarous of all Asiatics, traversed the land, burnt the cities, slew the inhabitants, and spared neither the aged counsellor, nor the bridegroom leading forth his bride, nor the infant in its mother's arms. All was then swallowed up in one indiscriminate destruction, and those whom the devouring pestilence had suffered to survive, were mowed down by the unsheathed sword of the hating adversary.—All this happened, because our ancestors had transgressed the covenant of the Lord; because they had refused to listen to the warning voice of his prophets, whom He had sent to announce the impending calamity; because the priest and prophet had been slain, as he lifted up his voice to denounce the backsliding of his brethren. It was, therefore, that the threatened vengeance was meted out, and this was the reason why the children of Judah were led forth as captives before the enemy.

One pre-eminently distinguished amongst the messengers of the Lord, both for the sufferings he had to endure, and for the almost unparalleled firmness with which he executed his heavenly mission, was the prophet Jeremiah, who both foretold the destruction of the temple, and witnessed the accomplishment of the dire forboding.—His was a heart alive to all the



finer feelings of human nature, and his mind was filled with the sublimest conceptions of religion, and his soul was animated by a sincere love towards his countrymen. He had seen the greatness of his people,—he had seen the turrets of Jerusalem presenting their bright pinnacles to the rising sun,—he had seen the multitudes of worshippers pouring from every village and hamlet of Palestine into thy gates, O Jerusalem!—he had seen the festive throng crowd the avenues of the temple; but he also was doomed to behold the reverse of all this, and his own eyes beheld the Israelites pursued by their enemies—the walls of Jerusalem crumble amidst the repeated attacks—the gates pulled down—and the temple in flames! He beheld it with inexpressible anguish, and thus he began his complaint—a complaint which must ever be regarded as the most splendid of lamentations:

איכה ישבה בדר העיר רבתי עם היתה כאלמנה רבתי  
 בגוים שרתי במדינות היתה למם : איכה א' א'

“Ha! how sits she so solitary, the city that was so populous, she has become like a widow; the great among the nations, the princess of provinces, has become tributary.” Lam. i. 1.

In these words the prophet gives vent to his overcharged feelings; he addresses Jerusalem, the city that once had been so populous, so great, and so powerful; and contrasting her then with her former state, he exclaims: “How sits she so solitary!” Jeremiah had seen the youths of Israel go forth to battle, had seen the mighty population of Jerusalem hasten out to the fight, to strike for God and his holy temple; but he had also beheld the flower of his people discomfitted, their valour wasted in vain, the remnant of the afflicted led into captivity, the temple of God levelled to the ground, the streets of Jerusalem rendered desolate, and the houses left without an inhabitant.—Jeremiah, therefore, continues: “Let her weep at nights,—let her tears be on her cheek, she has no comforter amongst all her friends, all her associates have become untrue to her, have become her enemies.” The peculiar constitution of our people had always exposed us to the jealousy and hatred of some of the foreign nations; it was, therefore, natural to expect, that

those who had been enemies in former times, would be arrayed against us in the time of our affliction; but that our allies, those who had always preserved the appearance of friendship, should be found untrue when their assistance was most needed, was more than even fear excited to the utmost apprehension could have conceived as probable; nevertheless, it so happened, and it appeared as though all the nations had colleagued to assist in our downfall, and to rejoice over our misfortune. Therefore, says the prophet: "Let her weep, she has no comforter amongst all her friends—they have become her enemies!" Nation vied with nation to oppress us, and the common consent of mankind seemed to have taken from us the rights of humanity. Who thought it wrong to maltreat an Israelite? Who thought it right to extend to us relief in the hour of our distress? No one—and every bowman sent his arrows against our bared bosom, every swordsman dyed his blade in the blood of the devoted race. But not this alone befel us; for the captors mocked our sorrows, they made their voices resound with the discordant shouts of triumph in the house of God, and they asked of the exiles to sing to them some of the songs of Zion.—But, says the prophet: "Jerusalem has severely sinned, therefore has she become an outcast;" it was in judgment for the manifold sins of Israel, that all these calamities occurred; and, says Jeremiah (including himself among the sinning people): "Righteous is the Lord, for I have rebelled against his word;" and thus those Israelites, who had neglected to obey the precepts of the Mosaic law, who had refused to listen to the advice of the prophets, were made to feel at the last, that though punishment may be long delayed, it *will* come at length, since the One above is all-knowing, and before Him, there is no forgetfulness, although his anger and his vengeance may long appear to slumber.

Instructive as doubtless it would be to analyze the remainder of the book of Lamentations, I am fearful of approaching the task, since the words of the prophet are so lucid and moving, and the whole diction so splendid, that their beauty must be marred by an attempt to abridge them, and but little can be added by way of comment on the text. But there is one passage in the third chapter which demands our especial atten-

tion ; I allude to the expression of confident reliance upon the unalterable promise of God, which is in the following words : “ This will I reflect on in my heart, therefore will I hope. The kindness of God will not let us be annihilated, for his mercies are without ending.” You will no doubt recollect, that God had promised through Jeremiah, that the captivity of the Israelites living under the dominion of the king of Judah was to endure only for *seventy* years. He therefore expressed his confidence in the certainty of the fulfilment, although at that moment there appeared but little likelihood of its accomplishment ; saying : Let the enemy even prevail, let all the punishment denounced be visited on our heads, let our children be led captives into the enemy’s land : yet am I confident that the nation of the Lord will not cease to be a nation, for his mercies are unending ; He punishes the sin, but will not utterly destroy the sinners ; the sons of Abraham have transgressed, but they will not be entirely cut off, because God has promised that his descendants should ever be a people, and He would ever be their God.—Jeremiah’s hopes were not unfounded ; it is true, that he—the patriot and seer—descended to the grave in the land of Egypt, far from his beloved and lamented Jerusalem—his eyes, therefore, never witnessed this consolation which he had announced in the name of God ; yet the prophecy itself was fulfilled, and when the time predicted had expired, the redeemed *Jews* returned to their land, though in a feeble state and few in number. They rebuilt the temple, although the one destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar had been much more splendid, and the worship was restored under Ezra and his associates ; and the Jews lived in their inheritance for many years, at first under the protection of the powerful kings of Persia and the Grecian princes of Egypt and Syria, and afterwards under chiefs of their own brethren. But, alas ! dissention and internal warfare broke out where peace and harmony should have reigned,—brother imbrued his hand in a brother’s blood, and the streets of the holy city were dyed with the blood of priests, of elders, and of innocent men ; and even strangers, the Romans namely, were called in to settle the fierce disputes which brothers carried on for the supreme authority over a land divided into implacable factions. The Israelites were again ripe for a

severe retribution for their sins, and those very Romans, who were in the first instance invited to act as umpires, where no dispute should have existed, encroached by degrees upon the independence of the people; and at length they sent governors to rule the country in the name of the Roman emperor. Duplicity and falsehood yet continued to reign amongst the Jews, and every man sought only his own aggrandizement, instead of endeavouring to rid the country of the common enemy. And could such a people maintain long the shadow of an independence, which the courtesy or the scorn of the proud and insidious Romans had left them? Could such a nation expect to receive that aid from above, with which their ancestors had so often overcome nations greater and mightier than themselves? Could assassins, I ask, dare to look for such assistance? Could those who bought and sold the exalted office of high priest, which was to be the inheritance of the most worthy of Aaron's sons, think of being deserving of heavenly aid to deliver them from their enemies? No,—for the Romans would not suffer them to be even nominally independent; the decisions of the courts of justice were reviewed by the proconsul; and the crimes withal of the Jews had been so great, that the wrath of Heaven, and the punishment of their sins could no longer be delayed; and thus it was that the blood of the innocent, slaughtered to satisfy the revengeful feelings of ambitious rivals, was amply revenged. It is needless to relate to you in detail the history of the Roman oppressions, and the manner in which the war, that ended in our downfall, was commenced, and the manner in which it was conducted, for ample details of the whole of these events have been left us by historians. I only wish to draw your attention to the close of the scene,—to the final siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple, by Vespasian and Titus. Read, brethren, the accounts which are given of the devotion of the Israelites in their defence of the house of God. They were, it is true, great sinners; the hands of some were stained by murder: yet their devoted patriotism in the final struggle, where every man became a tower, and every bosom a wall of defence, deserves our admiration, and we ought even to cherish the warmest feelings, I almost may say, of gratitude, when recalling the

noble exertions which they made in the holy cause. But alas! all was in vain; as already said, the sins of the people had been too great, and God could not suffer any longer his people to pollute by their presence the land which He had promised them on the sole condition, that they should prove obedient to his will. Therefore, it came to pass, that the enemy prevailed. On the seventeenth day of Thamuz, the Romans penetrated into the city; but even then the war raged fiercely, and the lion of Judah would not yield to the opposing force, however superior. And mothers slaughtered their children to appease their gnawing hunger—merciful fathers strove to prolong a miserable existence by devouring the flesh of their tender offspring;—yet the Jews would not surrender to the merciless foe. The clashing of swords daily grew louder in the streets of the devoted city—the tumult of war raged wilder and wilder in every avenue: yet the emaciated remnant stood firm, and displayed a heroism, which we shortsighted mortals might say to have deserved a better fate. But He, whose throne is in heaven, in his unerring wisdom had decreed it otherwise, and the desperate fights in the heart of the city were but like the violent throbs of the heart of the expiring giant, sinking gloriously beneath the repeated blows of numberless assailants.—For, wo unto us! it was on the ninth day of Ab, in the year of the world 3728, towards sunset, after the battle had raged for days around and in the courts of the temple, that a Roman soldier, against, it is said, the commands of Titus, who wished to preserve the holy building, threw a fire-brand into the sanctuary. Rapidly did the flames spread; and on all sides, towers were crushed, and walls crumbled into dust; whilst the bodies of the defenders covered the spots where they stood, and the corpses of the priests were thrown in heaps around the altar, and the floor of the temple was made slippery with the gore of the victims, and headless trunks and severed limbs were strewn about, and the wild shout of the heartless soldier was heard above the noise of the devouring element—destruction reigned all around—and even the voice of the commander, whom the sight of so much misery had excited to compassion, remained unheeded, and the brutal throng ceased not in their wanton efforts, till they were sated with slaughter. O God, Lord of all,

that thy justice demanded this sacrifice! that thy children were doomed to bleed by thousands, whilst the enemy prevailed, and entered thy sanctuary with fire and sword!

This was the misfortune which befel us on the ninth of Ab; it is for this that we fast, and mourn, and sit down in the dust, and hang the drapery of the dead over the ark in which the law of God is deposited. Where is the Israelite who can come into the Synagogue on the fast of the ninth of Ab, without being moved by the evil destiny which has overtaken his people? Where is that renegade member, who mourns not for the glory of Israel that has departed? I trust, that there is not one among you, my brethren, who is so lost to every emotion of patriotism, who values his religion so little, as not to feel sorrow on the anniversary of the destruction of our national government. But let those who feel in their hearts that they are Israelites indeed, assemble on the mournful day, with a contrite heart and devotional feelings, and pray to God for the welfare of the remnant of the flock that is yet spared, and entreat him that the sword may not be again unsheathed against us. For since the times of Titus, in every age, we were exposed to persecutions for the sake of our faith: we were summoned to forswear our belief in One Almighty God, and almost every nation has been by turns one of those who endeavoured to make us feel the more strongly the weight of our chains. But thanks to our Protector, and God, and Saviour from destruction! all their counsel was rendered as nought. They strove hard to accomplish their ends,—they murdered multitudes of innocents; but all in vain, for we are yet, even unto this day, a people, one and peculiar, a monument of the greatness of God, and an imperishable sign of his providence and wisdom. We are, it is true, dispersed over every land, in almost every island; but still we are united—the bond of one law, and the belief in one God, keep us as one, though scattered in every corner. It is in this manner that the God of our fathers has fulfilled the covenant which He made with us; and thus He has proved that his mercies are unending, even to the sinful and the lowly ones. He has also promised that when we are repentant, and return to Him in sincerity, that He would restore our captives, and bring us back to our land; and that during our sojourn in the coun-

tries of our enemies, He would never forsake us, and hear our prayer whenever we should call on Him in our affliction. O may you then always act so as to deserve the continuance of his protection; and may your conduct be such, that He may restore his kingdom to us; and that every beholder may exclaim: "Truly, these are the people of God, and these are the servants whom He has chosen!"

May the Lord of heaven have mercy on us all, and gather our captives unto the land which He has promised to our ancestors, and cause us again to hear before all nations, (as He has promised): "Behold I have redeemed you, last as first, to be your God; I am the Lord your God." May this be his will, and may the redeemer speedily come to Zion. Amen.

Ab 1st. } 5590.  
July 21st. }

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## DISCOURSE V.

### THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL.

HEAR us, O Father, hear us! for Thou art He, who hearkenest unto the supplication of all thy creatures; to Thee all flesh does fly for protection, and Thou grantest the prayer of all, even of the most lowly. Give us then, O Lord, thy consolation, and relieve us from all affliction. Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

In every age, in every year, nay, every day, and every hour, we see the wondrous power of God, manifested in a thousand different ways. Miracles are daily performed before our eyes, we see prodigies existing around us, but we pass them by without heeding them; for they are too familiar to us, we are too well acquainted with them, and they cease to interest us. You

see daily the tide ebb and flow, the fact is evident to you ; but this receding and advancing of the waters, does not strike you as miraculous, unless you set out resolved to think on and ponder over the greatness of the work of God. But not so the inhabitant of the shores of the Mediterranean Sea ; he has a vast sheet of water before his eyes, but it neither rises nor falls like the other seas ; and the first time, therefore, he views this wonderful phenomenon at a distance from his home, he must stand astonished and awe-struck at the great wonder.—To the inhabitant of an alpine region the stupendous granite walls, which on all sides surround him, are an every-day's sight, and he loses all knowledge of their wonderful majesty by roving among them at pleasure. But place the lowlander amidst these grand structures of God's potent creative word, and an expression of delightful surprise will unconsciously escape him, when he exclaims in the ecstasy of the moment : " How great are thy works, O God !"—The same also is the case with the ordinary occurrences of life. Any one, who should express his surprise at hearing the roar of the thunder, or at beholding the bright flash of the lightning, would perhaps be ridiculed for his childishness and simplicity, and we might perchance wonder, how things so common should retain sufficient interest to excite surprise and delight.—But if we come to reflect in sober earnestness upon all the wonders of creation,—if we view the regularity with which the tides rise and fall,—if we take a glance at the snow-capt mountains, from which issue innumerable streams that render the earth fruitful and habitable,—if we listen with awful silence, as becomes mortals when the Supreme sends forth his voice, to the loud roar of the desolating tempest : we must be filled with admiration at the goodness and potency of the great Creator, who has so wisely ordained all to work for a benificent end, in harmony and concert. And if we next come to contemplate, if even for a moment, on our own unworthiness, and consider how often we have by our misconduct incensed the Holy Spirit : we must be struck dumb with awe and reverence, for the forbearance we have experienced from that Almighty Being, who though so powerful beyond expression, is yet so indulgent to the sinful worms, that crawl as it were, in the dust before him. Some one perhaps there is, who



doubts the watchfulness of Providence over all the doings of the children of man; but do we not daily see that justice *is* done in the world? that hidden crimes are brought to light? that innocence is protected against the spiteful malice of powerful vice? It is true, that we lose sight of the miraculous part of the occurrence; we ascribe the result to a chain of circumstances, to the sagacity of the officers of justice, to whom the laws of the land have transferred the investigation and punishment of crimes against the peace of society; but tell me not, that *all* is owing to blind chance, to unalterable fate, to irrevocable laws of nature—speak not to me of the vigilance and circumspection of mere men; for all and every one of these, singly or combined, are insufficient to produce even a portion of the like results.—For say, what power has blind chance to reveal forgotten secrets?—what does fate know of the hidden misdeeds of the midnight robber?—what can human sagacity avail, when the subject to which observation should be directed is totally concealed from its knowledge? Do we not rather discern here the rays of the providential light, which illumine even darkness itself?

But this is not precisely the subject to which I would draw your attention this day, brethren, and I only introduced it to show how much matter of astonishment, and how many motives for adoration can be discovered all around us. At present, however, I wish to draw your especial attention to yourselves, to your existence as a people; for it may freely be said, that you are a standing miracle, one in whom the finger of God is pre-eminently displayed.

A time there was, we assert, when God bestowed upon the blessed patriarch Jacob, the name of Israel, as an especial gift, to denote, that the lowly righteous, even in affliction, was a favourite of his Maker;—we maintain that the Most High made known his laws and his statutes to Jacob's descendants, that they might love and fear Him all the days; and we believe, that God has promised again and again, through his servants, the prophets, that this people so descended and so blessed, should always be preserved through every danger and through every difficulty.—And, brethren, years and ages have rolled on, and this people is still in being; three thousand years have

elapsed, and the promise has not been forgotten; for we ourselves are the fruit of this glorious name, the inheritors of this holy law, and the objects of this cheering promise,—we are in short, a portion of the house of Israel.—It is we, who are the witnesses of God's miraculous providence on earth, a living testimonial of the truth of Revelation. For in vain do unbelievers endeavour to account for our continued existence in a natural way; in vain do they aver, that we have existed a long while, and that we, like other nations, sprung up under the guidance of a leader and legislator. But can it be asserted with seriousness, that this does reasonably account for our being as we are even unto this day? Say, where are the children of Solon? where the tribes of Numa, scattered, indeed, yet united? Say, where do we find a people, which has remained entire and undivided for centuries, through ages of *sin* and *persecution*? It is, indeed, but shutting the eye against conviction, and excluding the light which truth displays, to maintain, that because we are daily seen, that because we are no better than other divisions of mankind, there is nothing wonderful in our escape from destruction; for, notwithstanding the taunts of unbelievers, there is nothing that can shake the truth of our claims to a miraculous preservation; for nothing in nature—though nature itself is so wonderful an emanation from the Deity,—could have built up a people so hardy in their belief, so constant even under suffering, unless it be the special work of God, and the evident action of his unerring providence. And still there can be infidels! infidels even among Jews! Men, what are ye? Sinners, what is your aim? Will you the destruction of social well-being? Then injure Judaism.—Do you wish to dissolve all ties, which are precious and near to every human bosom? Then lay your withering hand upon the holy code of Moses? But beware, ye sacrilegious sinners! you war with the Almighty, your opponent is too powerful for your weak and impotent efforts, and the “stone you roll will come down thundering upon you,” and crush you beneath its weight, and bury you deep, deep, so that your memory even will be forgotten, or if remembered, it can only be, that you may be everlastingly accursed by every succeeding generation! And indeed, brethren, there is no fear that our religion can

ever be injured by any thing that man can do! Have not tyrants oppressed us in vain times without number? Have not priests forced their doctrines upon us with the faggot, the sword, the gibbet, and the rack? Have not unbelievers tried their utmost to ridicule us out of our belief? And yet we are here, that monument of the wisdom of God, which we were destined to be.—In the same spirit did our great teacher, Moses, speak, when his life was drawing to a close, and when he was permitted for the last time to address his beloved people, and to admonish them to practise those laws which he had been sent to teach unto them. These are his words (Deut. iv. 6–8):

ישמרתם ועשיתם כי הוא חכמתכם ובינתכם לעיני  
 העמים אשר ישמעון את כל החקים האלה ואמרו רק  
 עם חכם ונבון הגוי הגדול הזה : כי מי גוי גדול אשר  
 לו אלהים קרבים אליו כה' אלהינו בכל קראנו אליו :  
 ומי גוי גדול אשר לו חקים ומשפטים צדיקים ככל  
 התורה הזאת אשר אנכי נתן לפניכם היום : דבר' ד' ו' ח' :

“And observe to do them, for this law is your wisdom and your intelligence before the eyes of the nations, who may hear of all these statutes, and they will say, this great nation cannot be otherwise than a wise and intelligent people. For where is that nation, be it ever so great, to whom God is so near, as our God, whenever we call on Him? And where is that nation, be it ever so great, that has such just statutes and codes, as all this law, which I lay before you this day.”

Let us understand the meaning of this assertion of Moses; he did not intend to express, that every human being would show his admiration of the beautiful code which we possess by a strict obedience to its precepts; but that every member of the human family would, when made acquainted with its behests, acknowledge, in words at least, that the laws of the Israelites contained wise and just statutes. We need, therefore, not fear that any reasonable argument can be drawn against our religion from the fact, that but a small portion of mankind acknowledge this religion, nor from the often repeated apostacies of the Jews themselves; for the legislator did nowhere say, that he came to legislate for any other people, save the Israelites, and

those who might voluntarily join them ; and of the apostacy of the Jews, and of their frequent rebellions, he has left us the testimony of his own words recorded in the Pentateuch, by the express command of God.—It is not, therefore, from the great number of Israelites, nor from their pre-eminent piety, that we so confidently claim a divine origin for our religion ; it is solely its beauty, the extraordinary theory of government which it discloses, and the elevated knowledge of the divine attributes which it imparts, that compel us, even against our will, to confess that no human mind was ever capable of reaching a state of such perfection as to enable it to produce a structure so noble, and so well fitted in all its parts, and so well adapted to accomplish the objects for which it was intended. It therefore came to pass, that in every age, the eyes of all the world were turned upon our code and upon us, to whom it was entrusted. Unimportant as some of us, perhaps, may regard this heavenly gift, it is nevertheless that, from which the world has derived the greatest benefits. For look around you with the eye of inquiry, and you will be struck with the conviction, that wherever the Bible is carried civilization must follow in its track. It dispels, as it were, the darkness of superstition ; the shackles of tyranny are by it rent asunder ; and man is by it taught to raise his eyes to One God, and to know himself as a being destined by this Omnipotent Power, his Creator, for a state of uninterrupted happiness. Am I overrating the force which the word of God exercises over the hearts of men ? I imagine not ; and whatever the subtle sophist may advance to the contrary notwithstanding, it is undoubted, that the world has been taught true wisdom only by the emanation of the Supreme Wisdom. Moses therefore says to the Israelites : “ And observe and do them ; for this law is your wisdom and your intelligence in the eyes of the nations : ” and he here exhorts them to act according to the law, as laid down by him ; for only in this case would they be considered wise by the gentile people. Here too, we have a striking proof of the divine mission of Moses ; for does not our daily experience demonstrate, that no Jew ever can gain the esteem of strangers by transgressing the law ? Or does not rather a strict observance of its precepts ensure us always the respect, if not the love, of

others? But as it is not interested motives, be they what they may, which should be the only ones to sway us in matters of religion, since we are bound to be pious from love to God, and from a sincere reverence of his almighty power, and from gratitude for the innumerable benefits which we hourly receive from his bounty: we find that Moses rests not his appeal to Israelites upon the advantage which the possession of the law confers, alone, but also upon its containing laws so perfectly just in all their bearing, that their truth must be apparent to every person of intelligence. In addition to this, he inculcates in almost every chapter of the admonitory portion of the Pentateuch, that a filial confidence and a filial obedience are demanded of us as the perfection of piety; as we also read: "And know in thy heart, that as the father chastiseth his son, so the Lord thy God chastiseth thee." If we do possess these noble feelings in their full extent, we may confidently expect that the Lord will be nigh unto us, whenever we call upon Him, and that He will extend to us assistance in our afflictions, and send comfort to our souls even amidst the gloom of despair, when the ills of life seem to be approaching to overwhelm us by their weight. But we are not to imagine that the Ever-blessed has need for our service, or that He can be benefitted by aught we can do;—far be such presumptuous thoughts from our minds: on the contrary, all the benefit of virtue is ours, all the injury from sin must recoil upon our own heads. Moses, therefore, admonishes the Israelites, that they ought to be very careful in the observance of the duties which God demanded of them, for that punishment would be as necessary a consequence of sin, as reward is that of leading a religious life. The legislator further adduces the most cogent reason to the Israelites, why they in particular should be careful in following his advice: since they were the people who had seen God's power so manifestly exhibited, and had been in particular blessed with the gift of the divine law; and so they had peculiar obligations to fulfil, that is, to obey the precepts they had received and accepted as the law of the Creator of all.

The nature of the Mosaic law furnishes us, thus, with a number of sound reasons to prove its truth. But besides this internal evidence, there are many other arguments which present

themselves readily, even to a casual observer: for no matter how slightly a man may have suffered himself to investigate the nature of his religion, and the events connected therewith, he must have his attention unavoidably arrested by the remarkable fulfilment of prophetic predictions announced from time to time to our nation. One of the most memorable of these is contained in the portion of the Law, which we have read this day. Moses foretold that the Israelites were soon to cross the Jordan to inherit the land, which should be given unto them in consequence of the covenant which the Lord had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that, if obedient, they should live happily and securely, and there should be no one to make them afraid; but that in case of disobedience to the divine mandates, they should be speedily driven from this land and scattered amongst all the nations.—Just so it happened. The land was conquered after the death of Moses by Joshua, his chosen successor, who led the Israelites to the occupancy of their inheritance. But when Joshua and the elders of his days had died, the people chosen by God soon forgot the debt they owed to Him, and they transgressed the commandments they should have observed, and ever' and anon, they were delivered into the hands of surrounding nations, and they were only liberated from the yoke of their oppressors, when they turned again unto their God with prayer and penitence; and He then raised up unto them judges, who freed them from the pressure of foreign bondage. At length, under the kings, they had altogether forsaken the Lord, and the whole punishment denounced was therefore inflicted; first, the ten tribes composing the kingdom of Israel were expelled; and lastly, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with the family of Levi, were forced out of their country, and Palestine was left without an inhabitant. But says Moses: “And you will seek thence the Lord thy God, and thou shalt find Him, when thou seekest Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”—“For the Lord thy God is a merciful God, He will not forsake thee nor annihilate thee, nor will He forget the covenant with thy fathers which He has sworn unto them.”—And truly has this been fulfilled; when we transgressed we were not spared, and God pulled down the strongholds of Judah; He poured out his

anger over wood and stone ; the house of glory was razed to the ground, and the children of the covenant were scattered, and were dispersed in small numbers over all the earth. Many of our people, too, have been lost among the gentiles ; there are those of us who worship gods of silver and gods of gold ; and they bow down to deities which have no existence, save in the overheated and misguided fancy of deluded men. Despite, however, of all these calamities, we never have been totally without assistance ; full often it appeared as though the sun of Judah would set for ever ; as though the light of Israel were about to expire, never more to regain its lustre : and then, when despair had almost seized on the most confiding, a reassurance of the certainty of help infused courage into the heart of the most desponding, and it was thus proved that God will assist and console us, when we address our prayers to Him : and that He will never suffer us to sink under the burden of our misfortunes, though our deeds may not be always such, as to entitle us to this signal goodness. Indeed it was the divine interference that was so often manifested to effect our deliverance, for no other cause could have produced a result so unexpected, and preserved our people amidst so many difficulties. Are you now aware, brethren, how great this miracle is ? It is true, that it is not of that nature as to strike your outward eye with amazement ; it is not like an unexpected and sudden change of outward nature, which produces terror and astonishment in the beholder ; but it is of that species which, like the laws of nature, works uniformly, though silently, and is to the thinking mind a no less convincing proof of the divine power, than a great miracle visible to the eye wrought before the face of day in the presence of an assembled world.

Since now we see that so many of the predictions have been fulfilled, since it is evident that all the punishment has been sent, since all the afflictions have overtaken us : may we not reasonably hope, that the good also will not be withheld, whenever we have returned unto our God with all our heart and with all our soul ? Most assuredly ; especially as we see the good already partially accomplished, as has been said, in the preservation of the Israelitish people. If even the promised blessings be still delayed, if even our eyes be closing before we

*cond.*

have witnessed the consolation of Zion, we should not despair of the happy change ; for we should reflect, that the great God, who chose us when we were few, scattered us when sinning in prosperity, and preserved us in captivity, has also promised that He would ultimately do the good thing for his servants, and that his power can accomplish our restoration to our former glory.

And thus all the prophets, the messengers of Heaven, speak of that auspicious period, when universal peace shall prevail, and Israel be again in the land of Palestine, and the worship of the true God be spread over all the earth. This we call the consolation of Jerusalem, typical of Israel, of which Isaiah (chap. xl.) speaks as follows : " Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, says your God. Speak comfort unto the heart of Jerusalem, and call out unto her, that her appointed time is over, that her sin is forgiven, for she has received from the hand of the Lord twofold for all her sins. A voice cries out in the wilderness : Clear ye the way of the Lord, make even the highway in the desert for our God. Every valley shall be raised, and every mount and hill shall be levelled, and the crooked places shall be made even, and the precipices shall be made deep grounds. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see that the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." The prophet expresses here in figurative language the great restoration of the Israelites, when comfort shall be spoken to them that mourned for the affliction of Jerusalem ; this will be when the appointed time for the redemption has come, when our sins have all been atoned for, when all the punishment incurred has been meted out. Then, however, all difficulties will at once be seen to vanish, and as it were a highway will be made in the wilderness for the passage of the redeemed, and that which now appears as almost impossible, the reunion namely of the scattered flock, will be simultaneously accomplished, and we shall again be permitted to approach the confines of the land, which once was ours, as if mountains had been levelled and valleys had been raised. At this time too, all mankind will see the glory of God revealed, all will be made conscious of the errors of their ways, all will acknowledge the true religion of the Lord, all will respect that people



which remained so true to the word of God, and all will then confess, that it was none but God who spoke all these messages of consolation through the mouths of his prophets!

May we all live to behold the consolation of Israel, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the worship to the temple, and may we be held sufficiently deserving before our heavenly Father, to receive the crown of glory instead of ashes, and to participate of the joy of those who sincerely mourn for Zion, and ardently look forward to the time, when the Lord, whom we seek, will suddenly come to his sanctuary. Amen.

Ab 7th. }  
 July 27th. } 5590.

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## DISCOURSE VI.

### PERFECTION WITH GOD.

O THOU who givest understanding to man, and impartest unto mortals wisdom and knowledge, enlighten our souls, and purify our hearts; so that we may be permitted fully to comprehend the ordinances which Thou hast prescribed for our guidance, and that understanding these thy precepts we may at all times be able to obey them in truth and sincerity. Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

If we come to inquire in what the superiority of man over the brute creation really consists, we will find it to be his power of investigating things presented to his consideration, and of adopting from a free and unrestricted choice that which he may deem to be the most conducive to his happiness. No other animal possesses this capacity; it will eat, only because

its natural impulse teaches it that food is necessary for its preservation ; it will take this food wherever it can find it ready for its use, but it never thinks of tilling the ground to obtain the necessaries of life by means of art and labour. But man, in feeling that he is obliged to eat in order to prolong life, also discovers that raw food does not suit his taste, and that wild herbs are not palatable enough to gratify his appetite ; he therefore subjects to the action of heat, whatever he thinks can be improved in taste thereby, and by cultivating the soil he endeavours to obtain better articles of sustenance, and many more luxuries, than the earth would spontaneously yield. In this way then man has a superiority over the beasts in a physical view, since he can procure by art those comforts, which these cannot. Yet what is all physical superiority compared with the expansive powers of the human intellect? Is there any animal that can communicate its ideas by articulate sounds? Man alone possesses this power ; nay, more, he can, if he will, communicate his ideas to those far removed from him, yea, even to those, who may be born centuries after his death.—The animal when born has all its faculties at once developed, or at best, its education, if so it may be called, is soon completed, for to all appearance, but few additional ideas can be acquired by the most sagacious beast.—But man is always advancing, from the hour of his birth to that of his dissolution ; new light is constantly dawning upon his soul, and his understanding hourly acquires new stores of knowledge.—Can we now for a moment believe, that this signal superiority was conferred on man solely for the gratification of his earthly desires? can we suppose that the Creator would render his mind so perfect, his soul so intelligent, that he might be a better fed and more comfortable beast than a quadruped is? No, no, reason was not given to man, for the sole purpose of enabling him to accumulate luxuries and to multiply the means of his pleasures—and wisdom was not implanted in him, merely to fit him to ward off personal inconveniencies. But he was endowed with reason, that he might be enabled to think with humility and knowledge over the works of the great Creator, and wisdom was given him, that he might learn and understand the precepts of his God, and that understanding, he should endeavour to obey them, thus to

reach, through obedience, the highest degree of unbounded felicity.

That to think (in opposition to blind belief and dull acquiescence in received dogmas) is the duty of every truly religious man, that we are bound to reflect frequently upon the works and the precepts of God, can be proved from many passages of the Pentateuch; as Moses very often says: "And know in thy heart," which phrase evidently inculcates deep and serious reflection. Other sacred writers have given us in their sublime works, many splendid specimens of their deep thoughts; and so David in the *eighth* Psalm: "When I view thy heavens, the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast founded—what is man, that Thou shouldst think of him, and the child of earth that Thou shouldst regard him?" We thus see, that thought and reflection, deep and serious, are a duty which we, as rational beings destined for ulterior happiness, owe to our heavenly Father. Besides this, brethren, religion, such a religion at least as we possess, may be investigated, may be sifted, and exposed, and the freest inquiry even cannot injure it; for the more we enter into its sublimities, the more shall we be inclined to exclaim with the Psalmist: "Open Thou my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law!"—But to arrive at this blessed state of mind, in which David spoke, I mean, in order to arrive at a conviction of the sacredness and truth of religion, two things are necessary; first, we should start from the proper point; secondly, we must be cautious, that we enter not into what must, from the very constitution of man, be always hidden from him and unapproachable to his limited intellect. The evil effects arising from the neglect of this precaution are every day visible, and unfortunately too familiar; and we have often seen how a correct and humble reasoning is productive of religious conviction, and how many are led to become infidels, because they approach the sacred threshold of truth with presumption, and an overweening confidence in their own judgment. And yet infidelity always assumes and arrogates to itself, a claim to profound investigation; it affects to believe, that the religious and pious never think; it says, religion must be fostered by ignorance: and that the light of reason will overthrow the dominion of faith. But can infidels

establish their sole claim to profound reasoning? Is there so much wisdom in unbelief? Is there so much intellect in refusing to be guided by the law of God? We may safely and emphatically answer, no; for if worldly thinking, which reaches no farther than the animal frame, can be wisdom, how much higher must that thought stand, which looks to perpetuate in bliss the immortal spark, the undying soul of man.

Let us investigate this matter a little more closely, and indulge me awhile, brethren, whilst I detain you upon this subject, a subject which demands of all the most serious reflection. For in truth, there are those who say, that religion and reason are at variance; there are those, who endeavour to withdraw from man his only support in the hour of affliction, the consciousness of the protection of God, and a conviction of the infallibility and justice of the Almighty Judge; there are those who ridicule others for practising the duties which religion demands.—And yet these are the men who style themselves rationalists! vain boasters! for they are groping in the dark—they have wilfully extinguished the only light which could have shown them the way to true wisdom.

The cause of infidelity may be stated to be twofold; *first*, pride; *secondly*, fear. The vain egotist hears himself praised for his learning, he discovers that the world eagerly listens to whatever he puts forth, to derive pleasure and knowledge from his instruction. He becomes inflated with pride, and when he sees the regularity which pervades civilized life, when he discovers the profound veneration which the world feels for the source of all this good, the revelation of God: he affects to be surprised, and pretends that he could have made as good a code as that which is prized as the gift of Heaven,—nay, he even alleges that its standard of morality is not of a degree elevated enough to be satisfactory to the human intellect.—He is wise and great, this he has been often told, and he therefore thinks that the wisdom of God was not necessary to give a law to mankind; and as he once thinks it unnecessary, he next avers that it is impossible that God should audibly speak to man; and since he deems it impossible, the next assertion is, that it never took place, or in other words, that the revelation alleged to come from God is a sheer fabrication. Such a man, who

prides himself upon his wisdom, though an infidel in his professions, may yet live in strict conformity to those rules of morality which the Bible contains; he may even be stricter, than those who profess to believe in a divine origin of the law. But it can scarcely be principle, but more properly, pride, which preserves such a man from vice. He knows, that his standing in society is of that kind, that the eyes of many are turned towards him; he at least fancies himself an object of observation, having, according to the love which many feel for mere notoriety, done so much to obtain the public regard; he believes many are watching his movements to discover his faults, for the purpose of throwing discredit upon his mode of thinking, by placing his iniquity before the world, to forewarn others against following his example; he, therefore, endeavours, that his conduct shall throw no discredit upon his doctrines.—Nay, suppose him meek and unostentatious, intent only on doing good, which, however, is hardly possible; there is still no reason to imagine that religion is the less necessary to the rest of the world, although this one may be ostensibly virtuous whilst despising its tenets. For, observe brethren, this meek unostentatious philosopher was not born in a far-off land, where the tread of civilization had never before been heard, but in a well-regulated community; and he was reared, where the Bible is both known and venerated; he grew up amidst men professing religion, and he accordingly imbibed imperceptibly, those very principles which he affects to hold in so light an esteem; now he has reached manhood's years, and he continues to act as he has been accustomed to do; and no matter whether he says, he believes or not believes, it is nevertheless true, that the divine revelation, although not acknowledged, is his moral guide. Superficial reasoners, when seeing a virtuous unbeliever, or rather when seeing one affecting unbelief practising morality and maintaining an upright and honest character, may perhaps say, that a man may be truly good, and yet not believe one word of revelation; and in consequence, that revelation is not necessary to form a virtuous life, or is even altogether false. But they ought to bear in mind, that a man may imbibe principles, either virtuous or criminal, in a thousand ways, other than his own reasoning, without being con-

scious of the manner in which he acquired the same, or even without feeling at the time the new bias which his mind has received; secondly, that a man may profess to disbelieve revelation, merely to gain the name of a philosopher, a wise head, or a deep thinker; and that lastly, mere believing one thing or the other is not the sole cause of our being good or bad, for without good actions, no man, however firm his faith, can be said to be decidedly religious and good, being destitute of active virtue. Let us illustrate this by an example. A man passes along the street, and sees an object of distress, say a person just hurt by an unforeseen accident; he is engaged in deep thought, and he hastens on regardless of the distressed one, though a slight reflection would convince him, that his sympathy and his aid might be of service. All at once he is roused from his revery by the sound of a multitude of footsteps hastening to the spot which he has just left; he turns round, inquires the cause, and is told, that there is a man in great distress unable to move, and upon the whole, the greatest object of charity and commiseration imaginable. Immediately this man, a few moments before so unconcerned, is also seized with the contagion of pity, and pushing his way through the crowd, goes up to the person in distress, and is foremost among those who offer relief. Can such a one be said to have become charitable of his own accord?—This little scene is not altogether an imaginary sketch, for I have but little doubt, that many have experienced something very similar at some period of their life; and it proves, that we may be taught to practise charity, even without intending to receive such instruction; and no matter, whatever our belief may be at the moment, whether we believe in a Deity or not; whether we believe in a revelation or not; whether we even believe the poor wretch to be deserving of charity or not: we cannot ascribe our charitable feelings so suddenly called forth at the moment to any other cause than the example of others.—But now see the difference between the different actors in this drama of humanity. The gloomy atheist hastens forward to relieve the distress he sees; for he believes in an inevitable fate, and he lends his aid, because he himself may one day stand in need of similar assistance; it is interest then, nothing but self-love, which actuates

him.—The scornful infidel also comes here; he believes in a God, but thinks not that there is a Word of God to demand this good act of benevolence from him; what spurs him to the act? pride certainly, and perhaps interest; for to the world he wishes to display the benevolence of his heart, it is so good for effect, and then, perhaps, he may also call to mind, that change of circumstances may place him too one day in a situation as also to require succour.—But far different is the case with the really virtuous man, he who trusts in God's providence, and believes in his holy Word. When made conscious that his help is wanted, he needs no other incentive, than that his God demands it of him to do all the good he can, and he, therefore, obeys the mandate with alacrity. He flies to the assistance of the poor, speaks comfort to their minds, and admonishes them to submit with cheerfulness to the decree of Heaven; for all that God does is right, and because every thing, yes, punishment even, must be eventually for our advantage, if we draw a proper lesson from whatever occurs to us.—It will thus appear, that, though the most opposite in opinion may be acting from the impulse of the moment, and may join in the same deed of benevolence, their feelings and motives will be very different. The atheist can be prompted by interest solely, for he sees nothing around him but creatures of the same blind chance with himself, and finds in himself a being that needs at times the assistance of these very chance-impelled machines.—The infidel philosopher acts from a secret motive of pride, no matter how muchsoever this pride may lay concealed; and only the true believer can act from a motive which alone can give value to virtue—from disinterestedness, as far as this is compatible with human nature.

In the foregoing, I have endeavoured to elucidate the proposition, that principles can be imbibed unconsciously; for this is not the case with charity alone, but also with the reverence we feel for parents; respect for old age; attention to the education of children; the exercise of impartial justice, and in short with every social virtue.—Now grant even, that the philosopher who actually disbelieves revelation should never have read the Bible; believe, that he knows not a word of its contents; and suppose, if it be possible, that those who edu-

cated him knew nothing about it themselves: yet as he cannot close his eyes to what is going on around him, since he sees the actions of those who believe differently from him, can it be contended, even under all these circumstances, that he, the unbeliever, is not taught the principles of virtue by revelation? can it be supposed that any thing other than the example of others allures him to the love of justice and goodness? For the All-wise Creator has thrown so great a charm around virtue, and has made piety so lovely, that we are drawn towards them imperceptibly, and even whilst practising the evil, we feel a degradation at not doing the good. And as many a one is insensibly led to sin by being exposed to its influence, so may piety, being general, also attract unconscious followers; so true it is that the force of example is one of the most powerful agents in forming our character: and hence too the necessity of associating with those only, from whose conduct and conversation something good may be learned.

Besides the philosophical unbeliever, there are certain men, who, although in their own minds persuaded of the truth of religion, affect to be doubters; these are generally found amongst the *gay*, or the *uneducated*, or those who, having acquired but a *slight* degree of knowledge, imagine themselves completely fitted to form a comprehensive judgment. Some of this class wish to appear more enlightened than their neighbours or those who are older and more experienced; and they imagine that by ridiculing what others hold sacred, they can acquire and deserve the title of men of intelligence. Their vanity is the cause of their apparent infidelity; and if they do not practise immorality, they are restrained solely by the fear of incurring the punishment denounced against sin, but not by a true love of God, for they do not honour Him, whilst they affect a disregard for his word. Every day's experience proves the existence of such a class of perverse thinkers, and perhaps philosophical hypocrites of this kind are as numerous, as those who show more veneration for religion than they actually possess.

We have hitherto all along supposed an infidelity accompanied by a strict morality, and we have shown that taking it in its most favourable light, its sole principle of action can be nothing



but pride, or at best, interest and egotism. But if even we say that a learned infidel could be virtuous in the true sense of the word ; yet how dreadful must the consequences of his example be on others. They see a man blessed with strong mental powers professing to think, that the Supreme Ruler has laid no further restraint upon our inclinations than our own reason or *conscience*, as it is termed, imposes. The infidel himself, as has been said, has a motive for doing right, as his self-love teaches him to beware of losing his fair reputation ; his disciples, however, have no such check, they are of the common herd ; they are, every individual almost, belonging to the mass of the people at large, whose conduct is scarcely noticed, or if noticed soon forgotten. What then, we ask, can prevent them from doing every thing which the law forbids ? The Bible *scarcely* speaks to them, since they have been taught to despise it, and we all know, how inveterate the vulgar are in their prejudices and predilections, particularly when goaded by some indefinite popular cant, the meaning of which they, themselves, do not understand.\* The influence, therefore, of infidelity upon society at large, may be compared to the act of unchaining a tiger, maddened by hunger and captivity, in the midst of a populous city having no means of defence ; or rather of cutting through a dyke, erected as a defence against the sea, whilst millions of people are standing upon it in apparent security, who must be unable to save themselves before the waters of the ocean cover them, and bury them beneath the rising and foaming billows.—So, that if infidelity should even be not hurtful to an individual, which is however denied, still its bad example will destroy every thing dear to the heart, and consequently, on the score of expediency alone, even without any other reason, it ought to be discountenanced by every friend of the human race.

If the consequences of such an infidelity, ostensibly founded on reason, are so bad, those of the other species, arising from fear, are no less pernicious. An infidel from fear, I would call

\* No doubt every reader will call to mind the watchwords of the French Revolution of 1789: "Liberty and Equality!" and the "Death to the monks!" of the present civil war in Spain.

a man, who after having been guilty of some gross irreligious act, or who does not like to undertake the labour which is necessary to obtain the mastery over the passions: at last persuades himself, that whatever of religion he has been taught by his parents and teachers is the offspring of prejudice, ignorance, and bigotry. Such a one is a coward; he wishes to be assured, that religious restraints are not in any manner derived from God, and consequently that He cannot punish him for neglecting them; but if he could once be brought to think, that religion owed its existence to the actual precepts of the Deity, that punishment would sooner or later be meted out for the disregard of its precepts, or if he could summon courage enough to condemn his own conduct, if he could look upon himself as a sinner and transgressor of a divine mandate: it is highly probable that this man, who denies revelation from the motives of calming his uneasy conscience, would soon become a convert to a better course, and endeavour to obey the law, the infraction of which threatens him with consequences which he ought to dread. For it is reasonable enough to expect, that if a vaunting cowardice led him to deny the truth, the consciousness, that he will be accountable for his misdoings, when once awakened, must impel him to endeavour to make amends for his evil deeds to avert the impending punishment.—But whilst such a man remains stupified by sin and unreformed; whilst he pursues, unrestrained, his career of vice, he presents us a frightful and terrible example to what a state the human mind can be degraded. He indulges in midnight revelry; he resorts to the gaming-house, for he can find no delight at his own fireside, in the bosom of his family; in the mean time his deluded wife, rendered wicked perhaps by his example, expects with blood-shot eyes his late return; his ragged children are crying for want of food; and having sacrificed all to his sinful appetite, he himself is soon covered with the garb of poverty, and as by his excesses he has disgusted the good and virtuous of his former acquaintance, what remains for him but beggary, perhaps suicide, the scaffold, or at best the walls of a prison?—I may be perchance charged with exaggeration; but I ask, whether, if infidelity had this influence but on *one* man even (and there are, alas! thousands of its victims), it would still be

correct and proper to forewarn the wavering against following the path which led one fellow-being to destruction.

We have thus seen, that unbelief, be its source pride or fear, is equally destructive to the well-being of society no less than to the happiness of individuals; for it requires no argument to prove the self-evident proposition, that a state can only be well governed and remain undisturbed by factions, as long as the majority are virtuous and well-disposed to order and obedience to the laws.—Nothing, therefore, can be more true, than the words of Holy Writ, which declare :

אמר נבל בלבו אין אלהים :

“The fool only says in his heart, there is no God.” Psalm xiv. 1. And

חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו :

“But fools only despise wisdom and correction.” Proverbs i. 7.

And it is only the wisdom which especially comes from God, which is the source of all the good which the world enjoys; and indeed, none but those, who are self-deluded, can ever deny in serious earnest, that the benefits conferred on man by the divine law are really incalculable. In truth, none deny the excellence of our code, and the usefulness of its tendency; but some wish to derogate from its holiness merely, by levelling it down to a human institution. But if we look around us, and judge carefully by what is known to us, we must soon acknowledge, perhaps much to our mortification, that human wisdom, however exalted, was never able to produce laws whose efficacy could be tested by the experience of ages, as that of our holy law has been.—Shall we adduce arguments to prove this? No argument is necessary; for look but at the laws of Confucius, of Buddah, of Bramah, of Solon, of Lycurgus, and Numa; did they effect that for their people, which the Pentateuch has done for Israel? The Chinese, the Birmans, and the Hindoos, are confessedly ignorant, and the slaves of misrule and superstition; and whilst the laws of Solon rendered the Athenians factious in politics and loose in morals, and whilst Lycurgus attempted

to banish refinement, and make the state the chief good of his citizens: neither was able to preserve his followers from merging into other people, with the loss of their independence. And even Numa, the founder perhaps of Roman greatness, established superstition and soothsaying as a part of his government, and consequently his system too fell before the spread of enlightening principles; and the children of Numa revere the law of Moses. What then is there of degradation, what of meanness in obeying our laws? Why should pride refuse to yield to the enactments of the Supreme?—You will perhaps say, because man is already sufficiently endowed with reason; you may say, that the varied occupations of life demand all our attention; perchance you may say, that as civilization advances antiquated statutes ought to be discarded. In short, all the excuses which interest and vanity can furnish are snatched at to justify irreligion; man must exalt himself, in order to show, that he needs no instruction of God.—But why, we ask, should a mortal exult so much? why should he rely so much upon his finite wisdom, and forget that he is accountable to the Undying One?—Why should the beautiful think so much of adorning their persons, and neglect the sacred duties demanded of them? Why should the strong one aim at overcoming all the ills and dangers of life—as though he never *could* be moved,—and disregard the will of God.—Why should the powerful, nay, even the king upon his throne, the conqueror on the day of victory, value his own importance so highly as to refuse to follow those rules, by which the more humble are guided?—For often does the wisdom of the wise fail them; often does beauty fade in its prime; often the strong are cut off in the midst of their career, and often the mighty are deprived of their power, and are left forgotten and despised.—There is an instance of a man of mighty intellect, who had long delighted the world with the effusions of his knowledge; crowds flocked to hear and to admire his eloquence; the shafts of his satire were dreaded, as though they were the doom pronounced by an angel of God; his praise was received with delight; his name was honoured by all his countrymen, and it appeared that he had almost reached a point, whence he might look with contempt upon aught beneath him; when, alas! as if in mockery of human

greatness, his gigantic reason forsook him, and he, whose mind was almost a storehouse of knowledge, could not communicate his physical wants even to those willing and ready to serve him.—Many a fair one has stood by the side of him she loved; she, if any one could, might look with confidence upon a future bright and smiling; pleasure seemed to await her, and she was declared happy by all beholders. But soon the fair, frail, flower pined away; blighting disease seized on her vitals, and in a few brief months she was laid low in the dust; her husband was left to mourn in solitude, and the house of joy was changed into the dwelling of grief, because she, the beloved wife, was no more.—The brave in arms has been known to embark in the defence of his country's cause; he was seen to sleep on the bare ground, amongst those whom he led to battle.—He hurried forth to the fight, and glory seemed to lead him on where danger was the greatest; but he fell, and though the shout of victory was soon raised from rejoicing thousands, the hero heard it not, for his body reposed in death.—Once there reigned a king, who was powerful among the powerful; he was called, The Desired, The Illustrious; victory too perched on his standard, and his mighty rival was humbled by his skill, both in the field and the cabinet; who would believe it, if history did not authenticate the fact, that this king was hurled from his throne—was cast into prison—was tried like a felon—was torn even from the society of his family—and at last, was made a sacrifice to popular fury?—Well does Holy Writ admonish us (Jerm. ix. 22.): “Let not the wise boast of his wisdom, the strong man not of his strength, nor the rich man of his riches; but for this alone a man can praise himself—to be wise in knowing me, how I the Lord exercise grace, justice, and righteousness on earth, how I find pleasure in these, says the Eternal Lord.”—Suppose now, that a man should even possess all earthly blessings; imagine him to be rich, powerful, respected, and more than all, the wisest of men, what at last must be his end? will it not be like that of the meanest of his menials? It is only for a few short years that he can enjoy earthly goods, when he must depart hence to render a strict account of his deeds whilst here, before the dread Judge of all!

Since then, brethren, all human wisdom is imperfect—since all our power is so very circumscribed, why should we refuse to learn lessons of wisdom from the Source of all wisdom—from the Creator himself? Why should we not seek his counsel in every one of our actions; that is, consult through life the record of his words transmitted to us through Moses? Why should we omit calling for his aid whenever we are afflicted? Why should we not always regard him as our sole Protector in happiness, and as our Consoler in sorrow? And this, brethren, is precisely the wisdom which revelation teaches; it tells us to receive as our guide and instructor the word of our Father; it advises us to fly to Him for assistance in our troubles; and it promises us knowledge for doing the first, and salvation and enlargement for complying with the other duty. We are further commanded not to harden our hearts, when once we have done wrong, and not to persevere in sin under the plea that our conduct contradicts no positive rule of right; but that if erring, we should purify ourselves by a change of conduct, and rely upon the Merciful One for pardon in recompense for our sincere amendment.—If now we wish revelation to have its proper effect on us, we should, as said already, be particularly careful, when commencing religious inquiries, to start from the proper point, and then never to dive into mysteries which must always remain hidden from our knowledge. These two points are necessary, that we may not yield to pride and think ourselves too wise to learn, and never to look beyond what our reason is capable to bear; so that we may not be led into mysticism, philosophising, and irreligion. When you now, my respected hearers, commence the study of your religion, and to read with care the books of Sacred Writ, do it with humility, with a becoming distrust of your own mental powers: never think of finding fault with any thing that is obscure to you; and you should reflect, that the God who inspired his servants to write those splendid lessons of morality, and those elevated religious conceptions, must be incapable of giving us any thing in these books, which, when properly understood, can be otherwise than good and beneficial. You may meet with passages which you do not understand; but do not

reject them as unwise—on the contrary ascribe it to the insufficiency of your information upon the parts you are studying. You may find, that nearly all the personages in the Bible had more or less faults, and some of you may therefore think, that the holy Scriptures are unfit for reading, because they recount vice even. But you should reflect, that the Bible was intended to give us a true picture of life, in which the bad as well as the good act their part; and God purposed also to inculcate, by presenting us with an impartial history of man, that the good even may sometimes sin; in order to teach us humility, and to caution us against trusting to our own righteousness, and to admonish us not to presume upon our own goodness, since no one is without his faults. Secondly; when reading the Scriptures, and in seeing the transactions of life, you must not endeavour to inquire too deeply, why and wherefore every thing is as you find it; but consider, that as you have not the power of altering things at will, and as you cannot understand every thing (since even the most scientific does not comprehend the nature of substances presented to him, which he can handle, analyze and subdivide at pleasure); the One above must know better than we, how all ought to be organized, and that He only purposes the well-being of all his creatures in all He does.—With such views, brethren, you may fearlessly study the Scriptures, and think over their contents, and reflect upon the structure of the whole universe; and the rather, as you will by this means be hourly drawn nearer to your God, and be steadily advancing in veneration for his holy Word, which He in mercy communicated to mankind.—In short, it is your duty to confide strictly in God, with a single, undivided heart, and to believe truly in his laws, and to endeavour always so to live as the precepts of this law demand. And so also we read in this day's weekly portion (Deut. xviii. 13.):

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך :

“Thou shalt be entire with the Lord thy God,”—

entire in faith, and simple and devoted in confidence and attachment to our Father and Creator.—How this faith is to be

directed has been endeavoured to be elucidated by the foregoing observations.

May the grace of God be with us all, and may his light always guide us unto truth and happiness ! Amen.

Menachem 29th. }  
August 18th. } 5590.

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## DISCOURSE VII.

### THE COVENANT.

EVERLASTING FATHER, Creator of all, look down upon thy children here assembled to adore Thee, and vouchsafe to accept their prayer in favour, and may the offering of their lips be as incense before thy seat of mercy. Spread out over them the shadow of thy wings, so that they may dwell in safety until Thou callest them hence to appear before Thee in judgment. O let mercy prevail over justice on the approaching day of trial, and seal their doom to happiness, according to thy abundant kindness. Amen.

### BRETHREN !

Another year is nearly ended, and again does the returning autumn admonish us that we are approaching nearer and nearer to the termination of our earthly career. Behold the husbandman is busy now with gathering in the produce of the labour of his hands, and with joyous countenance he surveys the rich blessings which Providence has so kindly bestowed on him in the season which has just elapsed. See how every one is hastening to provide for the coming winter, when all labour in the field must cease, when only those who laboured, whilst the time was yet favourable, can think of enjoying ease and comfort.



But wo to the heedless ones, for want and sorrow must be theirs when the bleak frost shuts out from view the surface of this beautiful earth, and covers all with the robe of desolation. Already the days are shortening, and soon the long dreary nights will usurp the place of the gladsome days of summer. More and more we are admonished, that a severer season is coming, and that the pleasures which the spring and summer afforded, can in a short time be no longer enjoyed when winter rules the year. But spring will in its turn come again to revisit the earth, and restore to us the delights which it imparted before.—Man, too, has his spring-time of life, his youth and vigour ; the strength of manhood's years ; the ripeness of his intellect ; and at last his decay of bodily, perhaps of mental, powers : but, unlike the changes of the year, to him no youth returns, and the labour once neglected cannot be done in another period, and the time, once misspent, is lost for ever. Yes, for ever ! although the sound does fall so fearfully upon the ear, and throw so terrible a spell over the imagination ; and thus every thing, from the overthrow of a mighty empire to the occurrences of ordinary life, tells us : “ That our days are but a shadow on earth ! ”—Yet our time is long enough to enable us to do many a good act ; and to prove that we are worthy of being called the children of the Lord. This end is obtained by an ever active pursuit of virtue, and an always zealous observance of the ordinances of religion, which a man is to do to obtain through them life everlasting. We should therefore make it the unwavering rule of our whole existence on earth, to join to a sincere and heartfelt fear of God a cheerful obedience to the laws, which He has prescribed, for thus only can we accomplish the object of our creation.

We have had occasion before this, to notice several passages of the last address of Moses to the Israelites ; and we have seen how forcible the admonitions are which he impressed upon their minds before his death. In this address he had recapitulated briefly the principal events which had taken place since the redemption from Egypt : he also had recounted many precepts, and besought the Israelites to remain true to their God ; and in conclusion had pronounced terrible denunciations in case they should stray into the path of sin.—The last day of

his mission was now close at hand, when he thus spoke to the assembled congregation : “ You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God ; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers of justice,—every man of Israel. Your children, your wives, and the stranger that is within thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water. For the sake that thou mayest pass (accede to) through the covenant of the Lord thy God, and through his oath, which the Lord thy God makes with thee this day.” (Deut. xxix. 9–11.) You will readily observe, that Moses addressed indiscriminately every individual in the camp, to show us, that no man, however mean or exalted his station, can in anywise exonerate himself from being a party to the covenant of the Lord. He says : “ You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord ;” indicating to them, that all were taken as the servants of the Lord, and that the watchful eye of Providence was directed to every one individually, and that therefore every one should look upon himself as acceding separately to the covenant which was made with them on that day. This view also will explain, probably, why the teacher first says : “ You stand,” and afterwards, “ that thou mayest enter ;” for in fact he speaks to the whole nation first, and then to every man, separately viewed, of all Israel.—To this separate schooling of the whole people, to the fact that all were taught to look upon themselves as alike children of salvation, may be ascribed the extraordinary circumstance (rendered probable by the internal evidence of Deuteronomy), that at the period of Moses’s death there was a perfect unanimity with regard to the observance of the precepts of the law ; and we are led to believe that at this time all felt themselves impelled to respect those institutions which conferred upon them the extraordinary privilege of a perfect equality in the eye of the law (since no one could assume any superiority which was not delegated to him voluntarily), besides an absolute security of body and property. And it accordingly happened, that as long as this devotion to the ceremonial part of the law was maintained, peace and security reigned throughout all the boundaries of Israel ; for whilst the just fear of God was every where predominant, the relative position between the people and their rulers was also preserved,—and neither servile sub-

mission nor tyrannical sway was known in our land ; since the regard paid to one portion of the Mosaic code was a security for the maintenance of the other. And in truth it seemed as though the Almighty had personally descended to assume, in his glory, the rule over his people. Here then was a people acknowledging One God, unseen and incorporeal ; whilst surrounding nations bowed to many deities—the work of their own hands, and the offspring of their disordered fancy. Here was a people worshipping in humble meekness, in perfect consonance, with reason, the everblessed and adored One ; whilst surrounding nations sacrificed human victims to the idol of abomination. Here was a people protected by just and equitable laws, and living securely under the benevolent rule of accepted leaders ; whilst all around Palestine frightful despotism ruled with iron sway, and subjected whole communities to the arbitrary decisions of deified evil-doers, or the false prophecies of designing impostors. Thus was the superiority of God's covenant manifested, and thus was exemplified, that happy must be that people to whom the Eternal One is God.—O blessed days of our national prosperity ! you have, alas ! too soon passed away, and we now must mourn over our glory that has fallen, and over the people that are scattered and oppressed amongst the gentiles !

But, brethren, let me entreat you on this day, when the solemn period of the year is approaching ; the day when, according to our received tradition, judgment will be held over all nations, not to suffer the example of your ancestors to be lost upon you. Reflect that you are their lineal descendants, and the inheritors of the Law of which they were made the depository. Consider what it is that demands your attention, and by what ties you are bound to the Lord, and what bonds unite you to the departed great of early days, who were designated as the chosen friends of God, the immortal patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who, whilst yet ignorance reigned triumphant, whilst yet the deepest mental gloom covered the earth, stood forth as the champions of religion and morality, and spread the light of the fear of God into every land which their footsteps touched in their wanderings. You ought to be conscious, that it is your province to prove to the world how great your

attachment is for the heavenly legacy in your possession, and to make it manifest to all nations, that you are Israelites not in name merely, and to place it beyond a doubt, that you are really deserving of being denominated the chosen people—the people selected by the Supreme Wisdom to be a beacon to all nations, that they may be led, through you, unto that point of goodness, where virtue and happiness meet, where perfection and beatitude are united. Remember too that not only to the Israelites in the wilderness the Law was given, but that to us also, assembled here this day, the father of the prophets addressed his solemn warning in the following words :

וְלֹא אִתְּכֶם לְבָרְכֶם אֲנֹכִי כָרַת אֶת הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֵת  
הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֵּאת : כִּי אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנוּ פֹה עִמָּנוּ עֹמְדֵי הַיּוֹם  
לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֹה עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם :  
דְּבַר' כֵּט' יכ' :

“But not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath of confirmation; but with him who is here this day with us, standing before the Lord our God, and with him who is not with us here this day.”

Deut. xxix. 12.

These words of Moses are explicit, and he means to indicate that no generation of Israelites, no matter how far removed from the period of the promulgation of the Law, can ever divorce themselves from the observance of the commandments of the Lord. True it is, that we have no longer an opportunity of bringing sacrifices; we have no longer a priest to administer at the altar of God: we are consequently prevented from complying with all the ceremonial statutes; but this does not release us from those which are yet practicable—from those everlasting ordinances which were to be practised “in all the places of our residence,” and through which Israel has been so often blessed and signally benefitted. Look at the beautiful institution of the weekly day of rest, the symbol of the everlasting repose of the blessed hereafter, and the evidence of God’s rule on earth. The whole week man has been toiling to obtain food for himself and those dependant upon his exertion, to provide raiment and shelter for his wife and offspring, to shield them by human means from the dire mishaps of life,

and to acquire for them comforts and luxuries, and to place them in a respectable and honoured station in society. Six days he has thus laboured; by day exposed to the scorching sun, and by night unrefreshed by sleep that fled from his anxious pillow. But at length the blessed Sabbath arrives; the toil of the slave is suspended; the incessant blows of the artizan's hammer cease; the merchant closes his warehouse, and the industrious husbandman returns from the field to enjoy the day of the Lord in the bosom of his family. Behold the house of God is opened; group after group enters, and all sit awaiting the opening of the service offered up to our Maker. Hear the solemn hymn ascending; hear the fervent prayer of the devout, sweeter far than the fat of rams; listen to the word that is proclaimed aloud by the messenger in whom the congregation confide; behold the great hilarity that pervades all; and can you, can any mortal refuse to join in the thanksgiving: "Praised be the Lord who has given rest to His people Israel?" Not so ungrateful can you prove to the heavenly gift, which gives rest, and ease, and enlargement to the high and the humble,\* but all will gladly exclaim: "Praised be Thou, O Lord, who sanctifiest the Sabbath."

In the change of seasons various labours engage the sons of man; days of toil and nights of anxious thoughts are devoted to the increase of their physical prosperity, and but little attention is given to the welfare of the undying spirit. And thus it happens that men spend their days without thinking of moral perfection; and many a one, therefore, heaps sin upon transgression and misdeed upon offence, heedless that the path he is pursuing is the way of death. It was in mercy, therefore, that God devoted *one* day in the year for reflection; one day, on which his creatures should review their past conduct, and endeavour to correct whatever of evil they may find, and to fortify themselves in the good they have hitherto done. This day is the Day of Atonement, to which we are now fast approaching.—It is this day, which has been instituted as the

\* In the above sketch, I have endeavoured to exhibit what a Sabbath should be, and as it was observed in former times. But the spirit of gain now often induces labour on the seventh day even; yet may we not hope, that a speedy change will come over this evil spirit of our age?

season of universal penitence, fasting and prayer for the whole house of Israel; the day on which the Lord assured his servant Moses, when interceding for the rebellious people, that He had forgiven their iniquity.—I said, that it is a day of reflection and penitence. It is not enough, that we should assemble and pray outwardly; it is not enough that we say: “We have sinned;” but that the heart too should feel what the mouth utters, and no duplicity must dwell in our thoughts, when we appear at the foot of the throne of glory to ask forgiveness for our sins. It is therefore that the notes of preparation are sounded, therefore the *cornet* is blown on the first day of the year, to address itself in an audible voice to the slumberers, to rouse the loiterers on the path of virtue; and to admonish them to make reparation for the wrong they have done towards their Maker, and to satisfy those of their fellowmen whom they have wronged or offended, before cometh the day of the Lord. It is thus that the Sabbath, as well as the Day of Atonement, must tend to invigorate the body for renewed toil and exertion, and to fortify the soul in the true feeling of religion, by reconciling us to our God, and restoring peace and harmony between offended brothers. But it is needless to consume much time in pointing out the beauties of our religion, since they must be obvious to any one gifted with but a small share of penetration. My object in dwelling upon the subject at all, was to prove to you, that the Law itself is yet capable of being followed; to admonish you to be careful in the observance of its holy precepts, and to impress upon your minds the obligation which rests upon you, in consequence of your being parties to the covenant of God with Israel.—In continuation of the extract furnished above we are told by Moses, that God intended to raise us, in consequence of this covenant, to be His people, and that He also would in accordance with the same, be our God. Some one may now ask: “What is meant by the Israelites being made the people of God, since all the world is his? What is meant by his becoming the God of the Israelites, when He is the Creator and Ruler of every being that inhabits the universe?” To this we answer: To be the people, the peculiar people of God, is to be very careful so to live as this God directs; and He to be our God means, that He would bestow a

particular watchfulness and a more direct protection as a reward for this obedience. Before the period at which Moses spoke, we had been chosen to receive the Law of the Lord as the descendants of those particularly pious men, who, as we said above, stepped forth as the adorers of the Most High, when the rest of mankind was addicted to the grossest superstition; but after the divine descent on Sinai, we were promised the favour of Heaven only as a reward for filial confidence in the power of the Lord, and a strict conformity to his will: and for disobedience, punishment was denounced; and when our nation, in despite of the most solemn warnings, did transgress, calamity followed calamity, and they were surrendered to slaughter and slavery; their pleasant land was devastated; their fortified towns, which seemed to bid defiance to the hand of time, were levelled to the ground, and in vain does the inquiring traveller search for the site of some places the most renowned in the history of our people; and at others, the blackened and scattered ruins speak, alas! too plainly, that desolation has stalked abroad over Palestine, and the deserted districts proclaim, that the avenger's sword has done its work.

How then can sinners think themselves secure from punishment? did it ever fail to strike, though its blows were a long while stayed? What government was more feared than that of Israel, under David and Solomon? what nation was more refined than that subject to the wisest of men? What building was more the pride and ornament of the world, than was the temple at Jerusalem? And yet every thing was subverted, and all that was noble, with that which was grand, was overthrown, when sin had sapped the foundation of the holy edifice! Let not the wicked then imagine, that he is guarded against the evil; true, his path may appear to lead along verdant banks and through flowering meadows,—all nature may seem to smile upon his undertakings; his wisdom may seem to cover all his plans, as the shield covers the warrior, from all untoward accidents! But suddenly the evil may fly down from its hiding place, whence it has long been watching its destined prey, and alight upon the crest that never stooped; and rend the helmet, that withstood a thousand shocks; and shiver the lance which ever was victorious; and break the shield, which always pro-

tected; and tear out the heart, that e'er remained firm—never knew the throb of fear—never experienced the emotions of pity—and never succumbed to the force of a divine guidance. And, believe me, brethren, that however firmly a man may be fixed in prosperity, however grand his views may be, and however seemingly boundless his resources; there is a period which will come, be it soon or late, when all this grandeur will vanish, when the offspring of the mightiest genius will pass away, when the wisdom of the wisest will be set at naught. This we have been taught by ages of experience, since every thing and every man have been compelled to give way before some mightier successor. Thus have systems of government become antiquated; thus have monuments of art been hurled from their places; and thus have the sayings of the wisest been lost to posterity. And of all that has ever yet been held great by men, only *one* thing has withstood the shock of ages, and survives in all its youthful beauty, this is: **THE REVELATION OF OUR GOD!** Years have passed since it was promulgated, nay, our very nation has ceased to be ruled by the statutes it contains; yet the Word itself has never perished, and we have the assurance of God, that it never will be forgotten; but ages will rise after ages, and they shall all drink from the holy fountain, which supplies so bountifully the life-dispensing stream. Let it, therefore, be your immoveable purpose, brethren, to prove by word and deed your sincere attachment for this precious gift. You, amongst my hearers, who are entering life, seize it with eagerness, clasp it to your bosom, and call him your deadly enemy, who would endeavour to deprive you of that which is the life of your life!—You, who are in your full vigour and strength, take it as your guide in all your doings, and if for a season you have neglected it, employ a diligence and a care, assiduous and unceasing, to regain the advantages which you have wilfully or carelessly idled away!—And you, aged ones, to whom the grave already opens its awful glooms, consider it as the only support which can at all make the bed of death easy for you, which alone can soften the terrors which must appal you at your departure hence, which already before your dissolution, gives you a foretaste of the portion of the blessed in their altered state!—In short, let this



life be to you all, beloved brethren! the season of labour in the field of piety, so that you may have your virtues as the result of your toil, when the harvest is finished, when your *year* is ended, and when the winter of your days can be made happy only through the good deeds you have done, whilst you were permitted to work. And if by any mischance you have strayed from the path marked out by religion, let the present period be devoted to repentance, and to a sincere seeking of the Lord, before He cometh to judge the world; who knows, but He may see that you are sincere in your sorrow, and avert the evil which his justice may have decreed!

O Thou! to whom every secret is known, who art the Father of mercy, receive in thy mercy the returning sinner, and dispense to these thy children, life and happiness, when Thou comest to review them as the shepherd numbers his flock. Hold out thy protecting arm over them, that are the children of thy servants, that they may ever live to proclaim the glories of thy holy name! Amen.

Elul 20th. }  
 Sepr. 8th. } 5590.

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## DISCOURSE VIII.

### SIN AND REPENTANCE.

EVER-ENDURING and merciful King, Thou who reignest in glory, and who art good alike to the virtuous and the sinners, receive this day our supplication, and pronounce us cleansed from guilt in thy judgment, and slay us not in our wickedness; so that acknowledging thy goodness, we may live before Thee, and amend the sinfulness of our ways! Amen.

## BRETHREN OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!

We have been often told, that man is sinful by disposition, and that his inclinations are more directed to the practice of evil than of the good. This is often given as an excuse for manifold transgressions, and the worst actions are justified by an appeal to human nature. Men slumber supinely in their moral indolence, commit daily what they are admonished is evil, and from an utter prostration of all moral energy, are led, step by step, into that chaos of misdeeds, where the multiplicity of wickedness seems to bar the way for the egress of the sinner. And when we ask a man so devoid of virtue, why he does not alter? he says, that he cannot help himself, that habit has become second nature, and that it is utterly impossible for him to tell to the world, by now changing his conduct, that he himself considers his former course as wrong, and that he has a character for consistency to support; and then he adds some comparison between himself and others, who are perhaps worse in some points,—appeals to some few passages of Holy Writ, or sayings of the wise (which he erroneously explains in his justification), and may proceed perhaps so far, as to endeavour to make it appear, that he is, upon the whole, a really virtuous and a sincerely pious man; and he, thus forbids the approach to any one, who might be induced to offer him wholesome advice, and to admonish him, lest he sink completely into the slough of corruption.—But, brethren, human nature is not so wicked as the indolent and designing represent it; human reason is not so unfortified as some imagine, who might ask: “How are we to know what is right?” habit is not insuperable; and Holy Writ nowhere teaches that sin cannot be amended.—Yet some one may demand of us: “Does not evil exist? Is not the inclination to sin an ingredient in human nature?” To these questions we are willing to answer: that evil does in reality exist, that, doubtlessly, the tendency to sin is one of the principal ingredients in our nature; but at the same time we contend, that this very tendency is the chief requisite to constitute man as God intended him, a mixture both of spirit and matter. Look, I pray you, brethren, into the works of the Almighty, and you will find, that He has created different

orders of beings, who are all perfect in the position they occupy in the scale of creation. There are the beasts whose inclinations are purely earthly, and whose desires are never turned to the intellectual; they are perfect in their kind, for these desires tend to preserve them alive and propagate their species, and as they are not endowed with intellect, no practice of virtue is to them necessary to render them happy, and they, therefore, want nothing to satisfy their *mind*, after their *appetite* is stilled. As virtue is, according to this view, incompatible with the nature of animals, the practice of duties arising from the same is also incompatible with their nature; and a beast, therefore, has fulfilled the object of its creation, if it is careful of its self-preservation.—Opposite to the brute kind, stand those illustrious messengers of God, whom we term *angels*;\* these are pure spirits, that is to say, nothing earthly, nothing sensual, nothing mortal, nothing sinful is in their composition, but free from aught, save a pure love to their Maker, they are unconscious of evil inclinations, and they prove their love and undivided obedience by an always ready compliance with the will of God.—Between the brute and the angel, stands man,—this master-piece of the Creator,—a being possessing expansive views and great capacities of spirit, joined with earthly desires and propensities, and means to satisfy these desires; or, in other words, the beast is purely sensual, the angel purely spiritual, and man is a compound of both these characteristics; so that he occupies the middle station between the inferior and the higher grades of beings. It is not ours to inquire, why God in his wisdom was pleased to form these three varying classes of creatures; it is enough for us to know, that so is the fact, and we cannot, nay, we dare not attempt to arraign this wisdom in the judgment of our circumscribed knowledge.

Thus then we must discover, that in the gradual ascent from the lower to the higher, which is displayed in the whole system of nature, it was perfectly consonant with the arrangement of every thing as instituted by the Creator, to form man as the

\* Both the Hebrew word מַלְאָךְ and the Greek word ἄγγελος, literally rendered, mean messenger, or the being sent to execute a certain mission; so Moses was styled מַלְאָךְ. Numbers xx. 16.

point where the earthly and the heavenly were to be blended ; and consequently it was, of necessity, to be expected that this being in the scale of nature, should be endowed, from the position he occupies, with a portion of evil along with a great degree of good. You will now see, that the ingredient in our nature, which we denominate *evil*, is counterbalanced by the principle of *good* ; or in other words, if God has implanted within us earthly desires, He has in a degree fully as great made it necessary for us to become familiar with virtue ; and that, therefore, it is impossible to imagine a human being so totally depraved as to be devoid of every good feeling ; and we may safely add, that, if we range over the whole mass of mankind, we will not find one individual, however bad, who has not in his composition, nay, in his outward deportment, something which compels us to acknowledge, that the image of God has not been entirely defaced in him ; and thus it happens, that the most obdurate transgressor bears evidence of the goodness and wisdom of the Creator.

If now human nature is not so radically defective, as the indolent sinner represents it ; if, in fact, it is capable of being rendered an ornament and a blessing to the possessor : we ought next to inquire how this is to be effected, and to look for the means, by which human reason can be fortified to improve human nature ; or to speak more correctly, how is man to be made acquainted with that knowledge which will enable him to do nothing dissonant with the reason which was bestowed on him, and to do that only which will elevate the moral good in his composition over the moral evil ? For if it is once admitted, that human nature is not radically defective ; if it is conceded, that human reason has a guide to direct its steps to an always progressive improvement : it follows, that we have only to know this guide to be in possession of the means, if we have the will, to become as good as the shortness of our existence *here* will permit us ; and let me observe once for all, in this place, that this is all which the All-wise Father demands ; and if we have faithfully done all that lay in our power, no matter how little soever this may have been, we have acted to the satisfaction of our Maker. Now the question recurs : “ How is human reason to be fortified and improved ? ”

To this we answer : "By the revealed word of God !" for this is the guide which will lead us in the path we should go, and which will make us acquainted with the duties expected from us. In this manner then, we know how to be virtuous ; and consequently we can frame no excuse arising from the defectiveness of human nature, (since there exists none,) for being otherwise than morally and religiously good. True, the exercise of religious duties may interfere with our convenience ; true, that the precepts of revelation may not be all alike clear and intelligible to us ; but then we have the power given to us from above to subdue any obstacle arising within ourselves, from the bent of our inclinations ; and to doubts springing from a not sufficiently explained reason of any particular precept, we can oppose a firm confidence in the Supreme Wisdom, and this confidence will teach us, that nothing emanating from God can be otherwise than good, otherwise than wise, otherwise than beneficent and wholesome. It is thus, that we can overcome whatever is, according to our limited judgment, defective in our composition, and thus we can supply all the light which our own unassisted reason is unable to attain. Here now we see the wisdom of God pre-eminently displayed. He found it consonant with his plan, to make man a compound of good and evil ; a being, in whom the inclination to virtue is always contending with the desire for sin ; a creature whose mind, though rude in its natural state, is yet capable of being polished and improved constantly by instruction and example. If now, no other resource besides this capacity had been given, and as outward impressions daily take different forms, and consequently convey different ideas, we should have man always a prey to counteracting principles and a slave to uncertainty. But the other yet wanting resource has also been conferred, that is, a revelation of what is the truly useful in the eyes of God has been handed down, to assist him in combatting the evil, and to teach him how to distinguish between the good and the bad. Revelation should, therefore, not be regarded as a restraint so much, as an assistant to man in his earthly existence and a sure instructor of righteousness. To be virtuous then, means, so to direct our inclinations and actions as the knowledge of the good demands, and always to withstand those

desires which the word of God declares to be sinful. And sinning is a deviation from God's will as contained in the Bible, superinduced by following the propensity to evil rather than obeying the commandments of the Lord, and by neglecting the duties demanded of us by the religion which was bestowed on mankind as the best gift of Heaven.

If we next come to investigate the source of sin, we shall be able to trace it to two principal causes, to which all others are only subordinate; the first is arrogance,—the second carelessness. First, as to arrogance. The vain-glorious man, who thinks too highly of his own importance in the scale of beings, in whose estimation his own interest, pursuits, and will, are paramount to all other considerations, will not submit to be directed by any one, even if this one should be his Maker—He to whom he owes the obedience a child owes his parents, He to whom he should pay the reverence which a servant should pay to his master. Yet speak to such a man of religion, say aught to him about his having duties to fulfil other than those of gratifying his desires: and he will scoff at you as weak-minded and superstitious, and he will never suffer any thing at all resembling a sympathy with the religious feelings of his fellow-men to disturb his unnatural tranquillity; and in this manner, allowing the evil in his disposition to prevail, he by degrees sinks lower and lower into the whirlpool of transgression, and we have before us one who is every way depraved, yet assuming all the importance which virtue alone should impart. And still it is true that real virtue is always meek, never assumes importance, even if due to it; whilst the opposite quality is arrogant, haughty, and overbearing; and whenever we find a man thinking highly of himself, boasting of his attainments, and recounting his virtues, we may safely aver, that he is destitute both of wisdom and virtue.—A man, therefore, who is arrogant, will naturally enough neglect every pursuit except that which will tend to his own glorification; for as he is so much inflated with the idea of his self-importance, he will yield the reins to his inclinations whenever *self* can be gratified, or *interest* promoted, and thus he must daily stray to a greater distance from the point whither he should direct his steps.

The careless one on the other hand is deaf to admonition, because he imagines that it is impossible for him to make the least change in his conduct. To every advice he will answer, that it is out of his power to act differently, because his course is consistent with human frailty,—or that he must do a particular thing, because he cannot resist his inclinations ; and as an excuse for pretermittting any virtue, he may say that it would expose him to too many difficulties.—But do you not perceive that one arguing thus degrades the name of man ? He says, that his power over himself is incomplete, he arraigns the wisdom of the Creator in making him so imperfect,—when he he himself alone is to blame ; when his own supineness alone forbids his making any active exertions ; when in truth he could be good if he would but listen to the virtuous impulse which is no less within him than in the bosom of the best and greatest ; and he is thus wilfully bad, and he thus trifles away his eternal welfare, by vainly imagining that an extraordinary aid from above must be specially rendered to make him religious.—To avoid sinning, therefore, it is necessary to take a proper estimate of ourselves, and to reflect, that we are neither perfect in wickedness nor unexceptionable in goodness ; that our reason is something, though far from every thing ; and that the rudeness and uncertainty attendant on the uneducated state can easily be removed by a careful attention to the divine instruction that is daily offered to us. If thus we preserve a proper balance between meanness and pride, and if we look back on the one side at our humble origin, and on the other turn our view forward to the glorious destiny promised us as the reward of virtue : religion and piety must become the object of our chief desire, we must become unavoidably virtuous, and the very ingredient of evil with which we are endowed, must give additional firmness to our actions, and additional circumspection to our holy undertakings.

But some one may say whilst doing the wrong : “ I have sinned, I have been wicked, I have transgressed ; but Holy Writ itself speaks of innate wickedness, of sin being a ruler of human nature, I feel the impossibility of altering my way of life ; besides I have sinned beyond the hope of forgiveness ; the very name of virtue can never more be coupled with my name ;” and arguing so despondingly he may perhaps dash blindly

onward; try perhaps to drown the misgivings of despair in intemperance, and thus become in fact that very outcast which he conceives himself to be. To combat, therefore, this wretched sinfulness, which would make the word of God its excuse, it becomes imperiously necessary first to understand what Holy Writ teaches on this subject, and next to inquire if inveterate habits cannot be eradicated by means which the Almighty has placed within our power. If we examine with candour the texts found in Scripture relative to the power of sin over man, we must arrive at the conclusion, that they uniformly inculcate, that, although there is a disposition, and this a powerful disposition, to evil, there is yet an inherent power to do good existing in a superior degree. For we read in Genesis, chap. iv. 6: "Behold! if thou actest well, thou wilt be accepted;\* but if thou doest not act well, sin will rest at the door; and to thee is its desire; but thou canst rule over it." Here we are told, as clearly as words can do it, that no matter how great the internal temptation to sin may be, the internal power to subdue such an inclination is still greater. It is indeed true, that we are told in another chapter (viii) of the same book that God said: "He would not again destroy the earth as He had done at that time, because the desire of the heart of man is evil from his youth;" yet this does not gainsay the position we have assumed, that man can do the right, when the right has been explained to him; his inclination may lead one way, yet the knowledge of right will point out the other and better path; and so he is enabled to do that only which is virtuous, despite of his experiencing at the same time a secret yearning for the most monstrous crime. We read, therefore, in another place, Deut. xxx. 15—19: "Behold I lay before thee this day the life and the good, and the death and the evil—but choose life." We have accordingly incontestable proof to demonstrate, that according to scriptural doctrines, we have received from the Almighty all the requisites for making us virtuous, and, therefore, no excuse whatever can be drawn from the fountain of righteousness as an apology for a deviation from the precepts it contains. But as man generally endeavours to appear good in

\* According to the version of others: "Thou canst raise thy eyes." This, however, does not change the signification of the text.



the eyes of others, though in his own mind he must be convinced that he has no pretensions to virtue : he may perhaps seek to account for his sins by saying, that his education had been defective, and that having been long in the habit of doing the wrong before he was made conscious of its sinfulness, he has become entirely unfitted for practising what he is told to be the duties of religion. To obviate this apology for vice, and which is constantly urged by many as a complete justification of their remissness, we should consider that though education must exercise a powerful influence over us : yet we are not thereby prevented from being taught better rules than those imbibed in infancy, as we are growing older. If a man now finds that his education has been actually neglected, he is bound to remedy the defect as far as the light of a better knowledge, which by degrees dawns upon him, will enable him to accomplish. Long and inveterate habits and tastes may indeed have become very strong ; yet it must not be forgotten that *habit* does not root out the germ of virtue, which from its very nature is indestructible ; for the impulse to righteousness will be felt even if the moral field be overgrown by noxious weeds ; and it is this germ which will sting the arrogant sinner in the height of his pride and glory ; pursue the blood-stained murderer into his hidden retreat, and always admonish the most heedless transgressor that his conduct is unworthy of one created in the image of God.—If a man, therefore, should have been sunk in wickedness, even during the whole course of his life, he should still at no time despair of again being restored to goodness ; for the gates of mercy are never closed to him who wishes to enter them. And on this point, Holy Writ has shown him the means of commencing his reformation, that is, he should confess his sins before God with an humble and contrite heart ; for we read in Numbers, chap. v. 7: והחזירו את חטאתם אשר עשו  
 “And they shall confess the sin which they have done.” And this sincere confession of sins before the Creator is the first step towards amendment, for when a man recounts his misdeeds with a sincerity, such as he should exhibit before the Searcher of hearts, he must at the same time detect the *motives* which induced him to sin, and he will therefore be able to remedy the disease so soon as he knows the cause and the seat of it,

just as the medical practitioner, who can only successfully contend with the malady, when he has discovered what organ is affected, and to what extent his patient suffers. The next step necessary is to avoid as much as possible all temptations to sins in general, and especially to the particular sin of which he may have been guilty. This avoiding of temptation or opportunity for sin has the effect of making crime less familiar, and in consequence, not so necessary to him as before, and when he has studiously avoided for some time all approaches of wickedness, he may be assured that he is already, in a great degree, reformed; and when the same opportunities should, by chance, occur again, it is probable, that he will be able to overcome his inclinations, and prove thus, that a man may have been habituated to do wrong, yet learn by care and watchfulness again to act correctly. If, in the same manner, we would but consider on every occasion when we are going to do any wrong, be this an act of violence, the infraction of a moral law or transgression of a religious duty, that we could easily act otherwise, if we but had the wish: not half the sin, not half the mischief, not half the strife and contention would exist; and men then would be more virtuous and happy; and we should, in that case, not be shocked by the everlasting causes of affront, by which society, domestic as well as political, is agitated; and good will and harmony would often occupy the place of hatred and revenge, if we would but reflect before we make any angry replies, whether the words of our antagonist had been intended to wound our feelings; whether the insult be worth noticing, or if it would not be better to overlook an injury actually received, rather than incur the enmity of even a contemptible person, who may have injured us. And let us reflect, that if our neighbour has offended us, that we also may have offended him; and that all men need forgiveness of Heaven.

If a man now finds that he has sinned, and has an anxious desire to alter his conduct: he ought also to strive to mortify the vices which beset him. For instance, if he should discover himself to be avaricious, and that this love of money has often interfered with his charitable feelings. (which every one possesses, though often suppressed by the desire for wealth): he is bound to counteract his avarice on every suitable occasion; he should by degrees endeavour to forget, that money was once

his idol, and that it is perishable like every thing in this life, and if he cannot succeed in rendering himself very liberal, he can yet attain being moderately charitable.—If a man has been in the habit of considering every unguarded word an insult, and of resenting such an insult by angry replication or even personal attack : he must be extremely careful to shun every cause for quarrel, and never to touch upon topics which could at all bring angry feelings into play, either in himself or others. Perhaps he may yet be latently inclined to anger ; but when no evil effects have flowed from this anger for a considerable time, it is probable, that he may never again be betrayed into improper excesses, although he may never be able to eradicate, totally, a certain fretfulness and irritability of temper.—But the highest degree of amendment is, to eradicate the evil altogether, and this end can only be attained by a great and incessant vigilance over every access of the vice to which a man may have been addicted ; and he should learn to prove his perfect amendment, even when a convenient opportunity to sin offers, and to convince thus every one, that he has regained the mastery over his passions, and that he is again what the Deity intended him to be, when He spoke : “ Sin has its desire after thee, but thou canst rule over it.” In the same spirit does the Talmud advise : באותו פרק באותו מקום ובאותה אשה “ True repentance must be able to withstand temptation at exactly the same time and place, and with the same companions of former transgressions.”

As a further means of producing reformation, it is necessary that a man should be more diligent in the exercise of those virtues, which he may have practised, whilst he was yet merged in sin, so that by becoming more wedded to the good in general, he may be weaned from the wrong to which he has been addicted ; for it is a well established principle in morals, that one virtue is always the promoter of another, as also one crime generally paves the way for the commission of more sins.—To this reason also may be referred the practice of doing penance, by fasting, praying, and distributing of alms so universal among Israelites, a practice highly laudable, and the cause of much that is good. For when a man fasts from pure motives, it must produce a diligent inquiry into his conduct, more especially if the fasting be done in consequence of any

one wrong deed, of which in particular he has been guilty.—Prayers when offered up with a contrite spirit, will teach a man meekness, and an humble resignation to the will of his offended God, which should always accompany true repentance.—And the distribution of alms will, besides affording relief to the indigent, soften his heart, and by making him feel for the wo of others, teach him to feel the more strongly, how much pity and mercy he requires of God, how much grace he needs to have his sins forgiven.

But a sinner may ask: “Will my sins be forgiven? is the grace of God extended to one so unworthy as I am?” Yes, truly will *he* find grace who sincerely repents, and if he but once commences with serious earnestness, and with an immovable purpose: he may rest assured, that the work of reformation will go on prosperously, and that in recompense therefor, the gracious Father will pardon his transgressions, as far as this may be consistent with the rigorous and impartial justice with which He governs the world.

Come, therefore, repentant sinner! come and throw thyself at thy Father’s feet.—He will receive thee, although thy misdeeds are great; only do not tarry on account of the fearful struggle within thyself; retard not thy return to good from fear of the taunts of thy former associates in sin; and reflect, that the mercy thou claimest, can be the reward only of sincerity and perseverance; and if thy wrongs be manifold, endeavour to atone for them by a constant aiming after piety, as much as lays in thy power. And fearest thou to meet thy God? art thou ashamed to approach Him, because thou hast been so long a stranger to his service, and unseen within the threshold of his house? Then listen to what He has spoken through the mouth of his prophets, where He swears by his holy essence, that the repentant one shall be graciously received, when he forsakes the evil of his ways. For thus did Ezekiel announce the will and purpose of the Merciful One (chap. xxxiii. 11):

חִי אֲנִי נֹאם ה' אֱלֹהִים אִם אַחֲפֹץ בְּמוֹת הַרְשָׁע כִּי  
אִם בְּשׁוּב רָשָׁע מִדְּרָכָו וַחִיָּה שׁוּבוּ שׁוּבוּ מִדְּרָכֵיכֶם הַרְעִים  
וְלָמָּה תָּמוּתוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל : יְחִי לִגִּי יֵאָ :

“As sure as I live, speaks the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but in the return of the wicked from his evil way that he may live; return ye, return ye, from your evil ways, and why will you die, house of Israel.”

If then thou hast sinned, mortal one; if the weight of thy misdeeds are a burden to thee: come, approach thy God, confide in Him anew, and let the assurance, that thy return, though late, will be an acceptable offering to Him, calm thy troubled spirit!—Yes, let every one here assembled on this day, called emphatically שבת תשובה “the Sabbath of Repentance,” take a searching look into his past conduct, and let him investigate in what points he may have transgressed, in what way he may have offended his Maker, and let him then prepare himself, by purifying his heart, for the coming of the Day of Atonement. You, who have wronged your neighbour by injuring him in his worldly possessions, comply with the demand of the law, and make restitution for that which has been wrongfully obtained. And you who have wronged your brother in his fair fame, by robbing him of his honour, or by wounding his feelings, think not of asking forgiveness from above, till you have solicited the pardon of your fellow man, even if he be much your inferior, nay, the father of his son, and the master of his servant, and the teacher of his scholar. Let your hearts be pure, let your hands be clean of wrong, before you approach your heavenly Father on that day, on which, as He says, atonement shall be extended for sins truly repented of. And fear not, that you will not be favourably received, for He has said: “Throw off from you all your transgressions, which you may have transgressed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, and why will you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death of the guiltful one, speaks the Lord God, return and live.” Let us then all unite to return to God, let us all combine in brotherly love, and let us forget the injuries which we have received from one another. In this holy house, consecrated to the worship of the Everlasting One, let us assemble as one, free from envy, exempt from hatred; and let it be our study to prove, that the warning voice of the *Shophar* has not sounded in vain, that the fear of the Lord is truly seated in our hearts, and that we have not disregarded the voice full

of love and tenderness, which so mercifully calls to us from above: Return! Return!

May justice and righteousness reign always among you, and may virtue ever be the guide of all your actions; so that you may depart hence, as pure as you were at that moment, when God sent you hither to work out for yourselves everlasting happiness! Amen.

Tishry 5th. }  
 Sept. 22d. } 5591.

NOTE.—The above discourse was intended to present a summary of the causes of sin, and of the remedies to be applied, when the heart is made conscious of its wickedness. I am well aware, that the subjects are too much crowded together, but I preferred being guilty of too much brevity to dividing the subject. Besides, there will be found in the sequel several other lectures, where the causes, effects, and remedies of sin are more clearly pointed out. It was in compliance with an ancient custom, to preach on the subject of Atonement on the Sabbath of Repentance, that I wrote this and several subsequent sermons; and I must here acknowledge, that the arrangement I followed above, was partly borrowed from a book: “The Vintage of Ephraim,” by the celebrated Rabbi Ephraim Luntshetz. The book itself, I have not seen for many years, in fact, not since I was a boy, but the general idea of the learned preacher, is still the ground-work of the above sermon, and owes to it any merit it may possess.

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## DISCOURSE IX.

### THE CREATION.

FATHER of light and life, who dwellest within us all, and in whom all exists, and by whose word all existing things were brought unto being, give us thy blessing, and bestow on us through thy grace that prosperity, both temporal and everlasting, which we may be thought worthy of in the judgment of

thy unsearchable wisdom. But if Thou shouldst deem us deserving of punishment, then give us fortitude enough to bear thy paternal chastisement in meek resignation, and lead us thus to thy service, which is life. Amen.

### BRETHREN!

Holy Writ speaks emphatically: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse of æther proclaims the works of His hands!" And truly is this verified, at all times and among all classes of men. The man of learning will, at the deep hour of night, when darkness has spread her dusky mantle over the surface of the earth, forsake his couch, and wander abroad, to cast his eye upward to the star-clad heaven. Behold him standing for hours, anxiously gazing as each constellation in succession crosses the meridian of his horizon—see how rapturously he investigates and searches the countless host which blazes down upon him—see how eagerly he notes every remarkable appearance, how joyfully he marks every discovery he may happen to make: and then ask him what his feelings are at the moment; and he will tell you, that he is seized with a generous enthusiasm—that his heart is warmed by an admiration of the great Creator, and that his mind is filled with the greatest awe of reverence for that infinitely good Being, who maintaineth all by the potent will of his unending power!—Again, bend thy steps to a distant land, where the savage yet roams free from the trammels of civilization, where the rivers yet flow undisturbed by the prow of the merchant's ship, where the primeval oaks stand untouched by the woodman's axe—and there stand by whilst the untutored child of the forest rises from his bed of moss, at the early dawn of morning, watch his eye how it kindles at the sight of the blushing red which paints the East before him, how delighted he appears at seeing the sun elevate his bright disc over the flood of the broad stream, on whose banks his little cabin can scarcely be perceived; and mark the smile of satisfaction which lights up his countenance, as he utters his humble prayer to the God, who made all which gives him so much delight and happiness.—Yes, go where we will, let us be what we may, the works of God, all nature, must admonish us, that there is a Creator, and

that to Him, we all owe our being. And it is this knowledge, which we derive from comparing our own existence with that of every thing else around us, that compels us to look for an object of worship, one, to whom we may address our desires, and one of whom, he being also superior to any obstacle which can by possibility oppose him, we may expect deliverance in all our afflictions.—But, as some persons may not, at first sight, be able to understand, how the discovery of our being creatures compels us to be worshippers of a Supreme Being, or how at all it can be demonstrated that there exists such a Power: it may, perhaps, be useful to set the subject in a clearly intelligible light, by a few illustrations, which must remove any thing like doubt from the mind of the thinker.—I, an individual member of the human family, find, after repeated trials, that I am unable to produce the substance called iron: I must come, therefore, to the conclusion, that I cannot do it, and consequently, that I could have had no agency in its production. Still, as I find this substance in existence, and as I must be sure, that the being who produced it, has more power thus far, than I have, I must of necessity concede to him the superiority in this respect, at least. And so I must proceed at a view of every thing, animate or inanimate, and I shall thus, at every step of my investigation, discover the superiority of the Author of all nature.—I find myself, in trouble, afflicted with diseases which I cannot remove; I have sought in vain the assistance of creatures like myself, and yet no relief has followed; to whom then shall I turn, but to Him who made me? for must I not discover, from the very nature of my being, that He who made me and all I see, can, if He but will, renew me also? Should He, who created every thing, not be able to order things as best comports with his wisdom?—Again, if I take a view of life and the doings of man, the conviction will strike me, that, to obtain the favour of a mortal like myself, I am bound to act in a manner agreeable to his ideas of right, or in other words, I must try to make myself pleasing to the person I wish to propitiate, in order to obtain his favour and assistance. If I am now compelled to acknowledge a Supreme Being; if every thing admonishes me, that a Power actually does exist, whose sway extends over every object which this



vast structure contains; if I am assured, that under whatever affliction I may be, He is able and willing to extricate me; if I am led to believe, that it is my duty to endeavour to obtain the favour of this great Being by deeds of mine; if I am again convinced that to act otherwise would be injurious to me: it becomes evidently my duty, which at the same time corresponds with my interest, to seek the favour of the Supreme, by the doing of whatever He may call good and right, and by avoiding all which He may declare bad and wrong.—If we, according to this view, always regard our relative station to the Deity, we must necessarily be inclined to render Him the requisite homage, whatever this homage may be; and as a necessary consequence it follows, that we are bound to endeavour to acquire a sure knowledge of all the duties which we are to practise, and of all the wrongs which we are to avoid in obedience to the will of our Maker.—As religion now, or more properly speaking, a fulfilment of duties towards God, is by the disposition of man quite natural to him, it has been observed, that the members of the human family have at all times paid adoration to a Supreme Being, or to something which they conceived superior: the first is true worship; the second, superstition; still, even this is founded upon the dependence which man feels on a higher power, only overshadowed and weakened by ignorance, or the bad example of others.—Let us now briefly trace the order of various religious establishments, as we find them recorded or hinted at in the Bible, till we arrive at the promulgation of the heavenly code, by which it pleased Almighty God to organize Israel as his peculiar people. I shall not detain you long, brethren, but only take a rapid view of this interesting record, to point out to you the peculiar obligation you, as Israelites, are under to the Disposer of human events, for his great and signal goodness, in first rearing you to his service, and next in perpetuating this service so miraculously among you.—We read in this day's weekly portion, the history of the CREATION, which begins in the following words:

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ : והארץ  
היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלהים

מרחפת על פני המים : ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור :  
 ברא' א' א'-ג' :

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the water; and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” Gen. i. 1-3.

In this passage the Pentateuch tells us, that, when it pleased the Almighty Power to call beings of various kinds into existence, nothing was in being; but He, the Almighty, reigned alone in glory, in the words of the beautiful hymn,\* which we have just now sung: “Lord of the universe, who didst reign before any creature was created; and at the time that all, according to thy will, was made, then was thy name proclaimed king; and after all shall have ceased to exist, Thou wilt, O Tremendous One, reign alone. For Thou wert, Thou art, and Thou wilt ever be in glory; and Thou art One, and there is no second to be associated with Thee in the supreme rule; since Thou art without beginning and without ending, and thine is the almight and the government.” Then the word went forth from before Him, and matter was made from naught; and substances, antagonizing in their nature, were mingled, and fire and water were joined into one body, and air and earth were mixed, and the impenetrable gloom of rayless night hung over this incipient creation.—But the creative spirit of God was abroad, it waved along the chaotic mass, and soon was felt the effect of the will of the Lord, when He spoke: “Let there be light,” for then, instantaneously, “there was light.” Here, in but four words of the original Scriptures, we are presented with the most vivid picture imaginable of the Creator’s power; and no laboured description, no matter how elegant, could have presented to our mind any thing half so impressive and striking. Allow me, brethren, to draw in this place your attention to the sublimity, perspicuity, and elegance of the scriptural language; you are familiar with the Bible from your infancy, it is perhaps the first volume that was placed in your

\* The hymn ארון עולם; all these Discourses were spoken at the conclusion of the service,—at first after the concluding hymn, latterly before.

hands by your attentive parents ; and as you have thus early *skimmed* over its contents, you perchance lose, alas, too soon ! all knowledge of the vast treasures it contains ; you peradventure do not think, that a book so common and universal as the Bible can afford any instruction to the scholar and the enlightened man. But here lies the error ; for that which can teach so much that is useful to the ignorant, *must* contain, and does contain too, a vast fund for the instruction of, and reflection for, the most learned ; and, in truth, where do you find so true a portraiture of human life ? where so true a history of man ? where such noble lessons for his government ? where that impartiality and candour which adorn pre-eminently the pages of the Bible ? where that elegance, and brevity, and nervousness of diction, which have ever been the source of delight and instruction to us, and which address themselves so much to the heart and the judgment of every inquirer ? Nowhere else, but in that precious book, which contains the sentence : “ And God said, let there be light and there was light.” Darkness, as said already, had hitherto covered the creation, but the first step towards the beautiful organization which now delights us every where was the creation of light ; and it went out from Him, with whom the unquenchable light dwells, and it spread its beneficent rays over all nature, and the creation rejoiced, and the chaos was gladdened at its dawn, and gradually every object assumed the place assigned to it by the Author of all, and the luminaries were fixed in the immeasurable space, each in its respective orbit, and the waves of the ocean rolled round the earth, and the herbs and trees covered the globe, and the fish sported in their watery element, and the birds warbled in the air, and the beasts of the land grazed upon luxuriant meadows, and every being seemed happy as it came in perfection from the hands of our God.—To crown his works, God made man, at the last, from the clay of the earth, and breathed into him the spirit of life, and gave him understanding and knowledge, and gifted him more than any other creature on earth with intelligence and beauty, and assigned him a companion in every respect suited to his wants ; and to these two creatures so greatly endowed, He gave the dominion over every thing found on earth.—Man was, as we are told in the account trans-

mitted to us, created with a twofold disposition, one the inclination to good, the second the inclination to evil; or, to speak more correctly, he had the faculty given him, of choosing between doing, and omitting any act which might come in his way, not being compelled by any supernatural influence to do, nor withheld by the same means from doing whatever might suit his fancy or convenience. This being so created and constituted was placed in a delightful spot, where every thing necessary for his preservation was in abundance supplied, and he was told, that he might freely eat of the fruit of every tree in this spot, or garden as it is called, with the exception of one tree, called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which alone was forbidden to him; at the same time also, he was told, that death should be the consequence, as a punishment for the transgression of this, the first and only commandment of the Deity.—You will observe, brethren, that no force was laid upon man's inclination, he was left at liberty to act as he might choose; but with the transgression, he was also to take the consequence. And so then it happened, that both the wife and man yielded to their inclination, and ate of that which had been prohibited to them by their God. Their regret now came too late; and the merciful Avenger soon told them of their doom, that henceforth sorrow and labour should be their portion, instead of the uninterrupted enjoyment which had been theirs at their first creation, and the separation of the soul from the body was at length to ensue, when they had toiled their appointed time on earth.—Yet, even in this altered state, they had pointed out to them the way to happiness; for the Almighty did not cast them off utterly, but immediately provided them with necessaries suited to their altered state, and imbued their minds with firmness to oppose resignation to labour, and perseverance to difficulty; and He also taught them, that by an humble repentance, his favour might at all times be obtained, though the transgressions had been great. Thus, it came to pass, that man was sent forth from Eden, to regain by toil and the practice of virtue the favour of God which he had forfeited, by neglecting the only precept he had received from his Maker.

Soon after this, the mortal progeny of Adam increased on

earth, but they wilfully neglected to propitiate the favour of their heavenly Father, and, regardless of the restraints his ordinances had laid on their passions, they indulged in the grossest dissipation, and filled the earth with unnatural deeds of violence. God looked down with displeasure upon the misdeeds of his creatures, and seeing them deserving of punishment, He resolved to let justice take its course; and it appeared, as though He had changed his policy to mankind, for instead of causing them to prosper and multiply exceedingly, He now determined to exterminate the race, that defyingly had said to Him their God: "Depart thou from us!" But even in that degenerate age, there were those who had not departed from the path of righteousness, those who had clung unto God, when all others went astray; and they were, therefore, singled out for preservation, when all the rest were swept away, when the devouring flood buried all beneath the foaming surge, which for an entire year covered the surface of the earth like one vast, uninterrupted, limitless ocean. The rain poured down in torrents for forty days and forty nights, the water seemed to rise, and in fact was rising out of the bowels of the earth; and every living thing on the dry land was carried off, and every vestige of man's ingenuity was deluged, and only Noah, and those with him in the ark, were preserved amidst this general ruin.—Again the family of man multiplied, and they began gradually to spread over the face of the earth. They, however, soon forgot, or brought themselves to forget, the frightful catastrophe, the effects of which are to this very day visible all over the globe, well assured by the promise of God, that the like calamity should never happen again. They lived at the time, of which we are speaking, in the plain of Shinar, and they spoke all one language and one dialect, for as yet division had not corrupted the tongue of the sons of Noah. But they had been told by the divine decree: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;" this they wanted to prevent, they wished not to spread over the earth in detached nations; they, therefore, built themselves a tower and a city, vainly imagining, that by so doing they might have a security, that they should never be separated. But God, displeased at their opposition to his decree, caused it to happen,

that all of a sudden they spoke different languages, so that one could not understand the speech of the other, and they had to cease from their building, and were henceforward scattered over the earth. Thus, mankind began to be divided into families, and each portion chose a government, such as pleased them best; and by degrees the divisions between nations became more strongly marked, the greater the distances that divided them, and the more varied their respective languages were. But they too soon forgot the punishment they had suffered for their rebellion against God, and they neglected entirely the precepts they had received from Him. They, indeed, felt the want of a worship, and of a being to be worshipped; but the simple truth of *one universal God* did not suit the views of their tyrannical rulers, for then these too would have been obliged publicly to acknowledge their dependance upon the power of the universal Sovereign of all things. They, therefore, endeavoured to lead the minds of the community astray from the true God, and by their emissaries and pretended wonder-workers made them believe that other things, those visible to the eyes, had also an inherent power of doing as they liked, unchecked by a superior agency, and they erected altars to the sun, and moon, and the whole host of heaven, and made images to represent the deity, and bowed down before idols of abomination, and became daily and hourly more estranged from the worship of God; till at length they acknowledged mere men as gods, nay more, they learnt to worship beasts, some even the most loathsome reptiles, and others lastly inanimate substances, to which they had once foolishly ascribed divine powers. To perpetuate these superstitious usages a privileged class was instituted, to the members of which pretended secrets were intrusted, and who were exempt from public burdens and entirely separated from the rest of their countrymen. They feigned to prognosticate future events by the course of planets, by the appearance of the clouds, and even by the flight of birds, and the inspection of the entrails of slaughtered beasts; and the ravings of a maniac, or of a designing impostor, were regarded as the infallible decree of the God, before whom truth alone can stand. They also invented a false account of the origin of the world, and by interposing some other sensible and active being be-

tween God and man, they withdrew both the ignorant and the learned from the path of righteousness, till at last the frightful spectacle of human sacrifice was every where\* exhibited, and men were rendered infatuated enough to believe, that human blood was the most acceptable offering to appease the gods.—This was, indeed, a dreadful, a deplorable state of morals; and this horrible infatuation had well nigh seized the minds of all mankind, were it not that there arose a man in the midst of the land where idolatry had assumed the loftiest aspect, and where its very grandeur was well calculated to benighten the strongest understanding. It is highly probable, that the Chaldeans had made great progress in the knowledge of the heavens, and that the priests were the greatest astronomers of those days; and they had thus the power of enslaving the public mind by foretelling those things, which, as they well knew from their calculations, were to happen in the due course of nature. And yet, among these men it was, where our great ancestor lighted for the first time the lamp of the truest and best of sciences—the knowledge of God.—Yes, brethren, it was in the land of Chaldea, that Abram, as he was first named, stepped boldly forth, avowing his acknowledgment of the God of heaven and earth alone, and here he withstood (as we are told by our traditions) the trial of the greatest personal dangers. For it was natural enough, that the tyrants and deceivers of his native land should fear a man whose doctrines might well have hurled them from their thrones, when the people had been once convinced that their rulers were of the same origin with themselves; for you must know, that many of these wicked despots had asserted that they were descended from deified beings! But our God was Abram's protection, and He caused him to escape unscathed from the fiery furnace, and bid him to go forth from his native soil, to spread the knowledge of the Lord in other and more distant countries. And much had Abram to suffer whilst on this mission, but all was esteemed light by him, who bore his elevation with such great meekness, who only laboured in the holiest of causes; and, therefore, his virtue was

\* Every where! Yes, gentle reader, even among the Grecians and Romans; witness the sacrifice of Ephigenia, and of the consul Decius, as late as after the year 400 of the building of Rome.

recorded on high, and his sufferings were to be recompensed by much happiness;—his name was changed to Abraham, signifying that he should be the father of a multitude of nations, and he was blessed with a son at the age of a hundred years, and he sunk into the grave, after a long life of usefulness and activity. It was thus, that the true knowledge of God ever found its defenders in times of the grossest darkness and superstition, and it therefore came to pass, that the descendants of this patriarch were singled out as the favoured people of God, on account of the virtue of their ancestors, and they were prepared by a long period of suffering for the glorious epoch, when they were made the depository of God's will.—In the mean time the world advanced in refinement; but the worship which was pleasing to the Almighty was preserved, in all likelihood, among but few, except the descendants of the patriarchs, and these were labouring in hopeless servitude for cruel masters, in whose land they had at first been received as welcome guests. But when the appointed hour had arrived, they were led forth, to be freed in body and disenthralled in soul, into the wilderness, under the guidance of the great and pious leader, Moses, the son of Amram, and at the foot of yon Sinai, in the land of Arabia, they were informed of the will of God, and certified, that they could gain his favour by an obedience to his laws only.—And did God teach them his law with an appeal to their feelings, or by rousing their fears? No, for He announced himself simply: “I am the everlasting One thy God,” thus pointing out to them briefly their relation to Him,—that they were creatures, and He the Creator; and in this comprehensive revelation they were informed, that they owed their life, their freedom, in fact all they could then, or at any other time, call their own, to the bounty of Him who addressed them; and the conviction was in this way, naturally brought to their minds, that if they wished to prosper, they must direct their ideas, their hopes and their worship to Him, who had created them all, and in whose power were their lives and happiness.

In this light then should the history of the creation be regarded, as an exposition of our relation to God; and if we reflect well on this subject; if we always view ourselves as creatures, dependent upon the bounty of the Creator; if on every



occasion we search for truth where alone it can be found—in the book which contains the record of the Almighty's will ;—if we view with becoming reverence the works of His hands : we must be filled with adoration, with fear, with awe for the One, who, though so infinitely great, regards us with so much love, with so much kindness. But, brethren, let the presumptuous thought never enter into your inquiries : “ What is God? why did He make the world?” for these and similar questions must always remain concealed from you ; since, if even you impiously deny all moral responsibility to the One Supreme, you are not in the slightest degree nearer the solution of the mysteries of creation. Rather adopt the advice contained in the following,\* from one of our gifted poets, who says : “ And consider who thou art, and whence thy origin, and who it is that framed thee, and who gave thee wisdom, and whose power moveth thee ; and O look at the mighty works of God, and wake thy soul to action ; search His works ; but towards Him, presume not to stretch out thy hand ; for here thou wouldst ever search in what is hidden and concealed from thee.”—And truly, this humble searching, this pious enquiry after attainable truths, must improve the heart, and will assuredly render us worthy of being made children of everlasting happiness, when dwelling in the more immediate presence of God, when freed from all earthly cares, when elevated above all mortal desires, we shall be permitted to roam from region to region of wisdom and understanding, and be rewarded with a more extended sphere of knowledge, for having, whilst labouring in the vale of tears, sacrificed our desires and yielded our inclinations to the service of Him, who spoke and the world sprung into existence !

May this be our lot and the portion of all Israel ! Amen.

Tishry 27th. }  
Oct. 14th. } 5591.

\* The conclusion of the hymn, beginning. “ O Lord ! I will extol thy name,” from the service of the second New-Year's-Day. The above version differs materially from that of David Levi, who seems, strange enough, to have entirely misunderstood the poet's meaning.

## DISCOURSE X.

## PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

To the God, who sits enthroned in glory, be praise and adoration! Amen.

## BRETHREN!

Since the cares of life are so various, and since so many occurrences tend daily to chain our exclusive attention almost, withdrawing thereby our ideas from the pursuit of wisdom and the observance of religious duties: it becomes necessary for us to adopt, if possible, some infallible guides, which may lead us back to the path we should go, whenever we find ourselves on the point of being withdrawn into devious ways. It is known to you all, how great the force of example is; what then is to deter us from following the evil which others around us practise?—Again, we hourly see, how often men are misled by an apparent necessity; what shall we oppose to such a circumstance, when we ourselves are tempted?—And, lastly, many a one has been outwardly good, till an opportunity for sin presented itself in alluring colours; how shall we manage to avoid falling into the snare, which such an opportunity may lay for our unsteady feet?

It must be evident to the reflecting mind, that unless a person thinks correctly; it will be almost impossible for him to act correctly, since actions are, for the most part, the offspring of preconceived thoughts, and since but rarely any thing is done from what is commonly called the impulse of the moment; for even where a rash deed is committed, it will be found, upon investigation, to proceed from a train of ideas a long while indulged in, or it will be in accordance with the person's general conduct. So a man, who commits murder in a violent fit of anger, will doubtlessly have been in the habit of indulging in angry outbreaks of passion; and one, who habitually

gives the reins to his evil desires, will also be found obeying this impulse whenever he can. In the same manner, virtue will be found to be, for the most part, the child of a good train of thinking; and we therefore say of one man, that he acts from good principles, and of another, that his principles (or customary motives of action) are bad.—The question now arises: “By what process are we to bring our mind to a virtuous mode of thinking, and by what means are we to guard ourselves against being allured by false ideas of right and wrong?”—You must also observe, brethren, that we are very often placed in situations, where the motives for choosing between good and evil are very nearly balanced, if we take merely a superficial view of the case; and it requires the exercise of a great degree of fortitude and forbearance, to remain firm in the practice of the right, especially if it should happen, that the greater portion of those around us, do the wrong or neglect the good.—With these views premised, let us proceed to the following moral aphorism, from the third chapter of the Proverbs of the Fathers:

עקביא בן מהללאל אומר הסתכל בשלשה דברים ואין  
 אתה בא לידי עברה · דע מאין באת · ולאן אתה הולך ·  
 ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון : מאין באת מטפה  
 סרוחה · ולאן אתה הולך למקום עפר רמה ותולעה ·  
 ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון לפני מלך מלכי  
 המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא : אבות ג' א' :

“Akabia the son of Mahalalel said: Consider well three things, and thou wilt not be led into the power of sin; reflect on thy origin, whither thou art going, and before whom thou must once render an account of thy actions. Thou comest from an obscure origin; thou goest to a place of dust, worms, and corruption; and thou must be at length judged by, and render an account of thy doings before the King of the mightiest kings, the Holy One, to whom be praise.”

The words of this wise moralist convey to us the guide which is to lead us in every transaction of life, and which, if properly followed, will always preserve us from the power of sin. In a former discourse, we have defined sin to be a depar-

ture from the commandments of God, superinduced by preferring to obey the inclination to evil which is within us. To avoid, therefore, obeying the evil impulse, we are advised by our wise men, to reflect well upon our origin, our end, and our ultimate destination, inasmuch as we are destined to appear in judgment, before the dread and impartial Judge, who notices all our actions.—“Thou camest,” says Akabia, “from an humble origin;” reflect, O son of man, what thy beginning was, look back upon the period of thy birth, and consider what was then thy strength. Thou sprangest into existence a weak and tender infant, no speech was thine to express thy wants, and only the tears of infantile anguish proclaimed to thy nurses that thou wast in pain, and thou wast glad, when thy pressing wants were satisfied, and thy penetration was not yet sufficiently developed to look forward to the coming day.—Was this a state at all calculated to fill thy mind with pride? what wouldst thou have been if left to thyself? what was thy strength able to effect? wouldst thou have been capable to provide thyself with food and to ward off the pain caused by exposure to heat, to cold, to changes of climate and seasons? Thou now possessest the faculty to express thy wishes and thoughts by articulate words; but say, wouldst thou have been enabled to do so, if thy mother and thy friends had not early taught thee? If thou hadst been left to thy own care, been thrown back upon thy own resources, can it be possible that knowledge too would have been thine, that science would have had charms for thee? No, no, vain man, thou wouldst have perished for want, were it not that the guardians of thy infancy had watched over thee, and provided, perhaps with the sweat of their brow, for thy many wants; to them thou art indebted, that thou canst speak, that thou art delighted with knowledge, that thou art elevated above the brute animal, which now obeys thy nod. And yet thou boastest? and yet thou lookest down with scorn upon the ignorance of the untutored savage? and yet thou art vain of thy acquirements?—Rather it would be seemly, that thou shouldst be humble and meek to regard those with pity that are not so highly favoured; and thou oughtest to consider that thy origin is like theirs, that thou too art man, subject to the same rule, and living by the favour of the same God,—the

God, from whom all is derived,—the God, who provideth and careth for all and every one of his creatures. If then, mortal one, thy heart should feel elated with pride, if thou seest thyself blest with wisdom and knowledge, if thou art possessed of wealth and honour : thou shouldst consider, that the creature ought not to be proud before the Creator, and that thy wisdom, thy riches, and thy honours, are the gifts of the Almighty. If thus thou thinkest, thou wilt walk in humble meekness before the Lord, thou wilt love all those that are like thee of the same humble beginning, destined for the same glorious end ; and thou wilt then gladly obey his will, and shun the evil which He hates ; and viewing thy existence in this state as a time of trial and probation, thou wilt regard all earthly blessings as valuable only if tending to promote the permanent good ; and thou wilt say with the Psalmist : “ I am but a pilgrim before Thee, a stranger like all my fathers ! ”

Says the moralist, in continuation of his admonition : “ Thou goest to a place of dust, worms, and corruption.” Man, in the pursuit of his occupations, seems to act as though he were fixed in this life for ever. His plans are extensive, he calculates on making his power and his influence felt far and near, and lives—forgetful of the duties of religion, regardless of the rights of his fellow-men, striving only to gratify his desires, and intent on increasing his worldly stores.—To such a one the wise man says : “ Regard whither thou art going, to a place of dust, worms, and corruption.” Yes, come hither, wicked one,—come, gaze upon this corrupted remnant of humanity ; nay, do not avert thy eyes, but gaze steadfastly ; this skeleton, nearly bereft of flesh, was once a man like thyself ; he was wise, and thousands listened to his counsel ; he was great, and every one feared his wrath ; he but spoke, and his commands were obeyed ; princes waited in his out-courts, and nations expected with anxiety the decisions of his will ; but he at length sickened, and his soul was fain to leave his diseased body ; he was lowered into the grave, his flesh was given to corruption, and now, the very worms disdain to dwell any longer in *their* palace, where they have rioted so long. Nay, more, all that he built on earth has been pulled down, his wisdom has barely left a trace behind, and strangers now enjoy

all he had amassed with so much care and with so much labour. And yet thou only thinkest of gratifying thy desires? thou heedest not the coming day, when the sight of thy eyes will depart, when the hearing of thy ears will vanish, and when thy proud heart will cease to beat? But say—was it for this that life was given thee—wast thou for this purpose sent on earth—merely to live in luxury, to gratify base desires, and to be careless of the welfare of thy soul? Rather let the coming day of thy dissolution act as a constant warning to thee, that thou art frail and mortal; reflect that nothing of all thy amassed wealth will accompany thee to the grave, that not one of the indulgencies of pleasure will benefit thee aught at thy departure, and that only the virtues which thou hast made thy own, that only the good deeds which thou hast done, will make thy rest easy and thy after existence glorious. And since “thou art dust, and to dust thou must return,” it is thy duty to shun every evil which may endeavour to allure thee; and if the struggle be great, if thou see all thy associates forsake the way of good: thou shouldst consider, that the struggle once past, the difficulties once overcome, the satisfaction thou wilt feel must be infinitely greater than the gratification of the passions could possibly have yielded.

As a last remedy against the approach of sin, we are advised to reflect: “Before whom we are to be judged, and who it is before whom we are to render an account of all our actions.” Man in the hurry of busy life may imagine that his deeds will pass unnoticed; nay, he may be convinced, that no human eye is witness to his proposed conduct, and he may suppose, that he has taken all the means necessary to escape detection; he may therefore presume perhaps to do wrong, fancying himself secured against all punishment. But though man’s vigilance may thus be eluded, let the sinner reflect, that there is an *eye* above which is always open; that there is a *watchfulness*, and a *Providence* which never slumber; that there is a *superintending Being* who never forgets; and then let him deem himself screened against evil, let him imagine his misdeeds buried in oblivion. Hah! should God not see, though man be deceived? is God not able to mete out punishment, though human power be eluded? And grant, even, that

through a long life on earth a man should have been suffered to pass along in worldly prosperity ; even let his pleasures have been unalloyed by sorrow ; even let his family have grown up around him blest with health, with riches, with power, and with wisdom ; yes, grant all this—but has he, after all, the slightest reason for supposing that retribution will never reach him ? can he believe that all danger is past with the end of the career, the short career on earth ? No, vain-glorious sinner ! no, irreligious offender ! with this life thy existence endeth not ! thy stay on earth is but a stage in thy being ! for know, when thy body is buried in its kindred earth, when thy bones have been surrendered to corruption, then thy soul, thy spirit, thy *self* will be compelled to appear before the judgment throne of thy Maker, to answer for deeds done in the flesh, whilst thou wast, as man, empowered to spend thy days in the service of thy God, and in acts of benevolence towards thy fellow-men. And yet thou canst glory in thy iniquity ? and yet thou retainest the wrongfully acquired substance of the orphan and the widow in thy possession ? How canst thou dare to think of thus meeting the impartial Judge ? what are thy good deeds in comparison with thy sins ? will not the noble time so misspent, the valuable opportunities for ennobling the mind so neglected, the injury done to the helpless that confided in thy honesty, rise up against thee, and be thy accusers. Miserable, self-deluded worm ! fearest thou not the Creator—art thou heedless of incurring his just indignation—weenest thou that He is not potent to punish ?—then listen to the dreadful storm—which is but the breath of his nostrils ; and hearken to the loud pealing thunder—the echo of his voice when He speaks ; and behold the devouring flame of the bright lightning, which is only the flash of his eye !—and then consider, that He is thy Author, and thy Father, and only desirous of thy welfare, but that He is also thy Judge, that from Him nothing is hidden, by Him nothing is forgotten, and that to Him thou art at length compelled to return, though thou shouldst live a thousand years. And must thou not tremble at thy own ingratitude, be amazed at thy effrontery, and cower in the very dust for shame at thy presumption, in disregarding the warning of thy everlasting Benefactor, that would gladly render thee happy and blessed

unto all eternity?—Let this view, therefore, allay thy obduracy, let it soften thy heart, let it lower thy pride; and if thou art once fully alive to the impressive knowledge, that thou art but “man born of woman, short of days and full of trouble,” and that He above “is God, great and highly extolled, to whose greatness there is no end;” thou wilt not soon be led into sin, since thou must then be always animated by a sincere attachment and reverence for the great Being, who so kindly sustains thee, who so bountifully provides for thy daily wants, and who has so graciously given thee a law by following which thou canst always gain his favour, and secure unto thyself everlasting happiness!

May virtue and life everlasting be our portion! Amen.

Cheshvan 23d. }  
November 9th. } 5591.

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## DISCOURSE XI.

### THE FESTIVAL OF HANUCKAH.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, who watchest with unbounded solicitude over the welfare of thy creatures, and who hast so often held out thy protecting arm over thy people Israel; save us now, protect us now and for ever, because of thy holy name by which we are called! Amen.

BRETHREN!

The wisest of men, speaking by divine inspiration, says:

מגדל עז שם ה' בו ירוץ צדיק ונשגב : משלי יח' "

“A tower of strength is the name of the Lord; to it, the righteous runs and is protected.” Prov. xviii. 10.



And truly has this been so often exemplified, that a man must, indeed, be totally blinded by prejudice, and perfectly heedless of what passes hourly before his eyes, if he is unwilling to acknowledge this truth. Look, brethren, I beseech you, upon the occurrences of your lives, and see you not how often very inadequate means have brought about unexpected results, unexpected even to yourselves, who were the sole actors? By whose agency was this accomplished? Not by your wisdom, for you did not contemplate, as likely, the actual result.—Not by your industry, for the means were, to all appearance, inadequate to the accomplished end. And nevertheless, you see the fact too plainly to doubt it; you must, therefore, confess in your hearts, that the All-ruling God proved to you his superintendence over the affairs of man; even if, in your own estimation, you belong to that class of individuals, whose existence and doings have apparently no great influence on the welfare of society at large. If this is shown in the affairs of individuals, we shall see it, perhaps, oftener in the transactions of nations, if we will but be attentive observers; for here also, the power and superintendence of God are displayed too palpably to escape the notice of the inquirer after truth. And no nation, however great its power, however ancient its first rise, has had more examples in its history of great deeds done by small means, than we can show—we, the descendants of Israel, selected from among all nations by the All-wise Ruler to be his people—to be devoted to his service—and to be a beacon to all other families of the earth.—Truly, well may Israel say: “Oft have enemies pressed me hard from the time of my youth; oft have they pressed me hard from the time of my youth, yet they did not overcome me. On my back the ploughmen ploughed; they drew long their furrows; but righteous is He, the Lord, He hewed asunder the ropes of the wicked.” (Psalm cxxix.)—Full often have the enemies said: “Come let us pull down the city of Zion; let us destroy the temple on Moriah; let us blot out the Hebrews from amidst nations;” but they strove against One mightier far than all human power; One, wiser far than all the wisdom of men; and they failed, as fail they must, in their enterprise, and were overwhelmed with confusion, when every thing seemed to

yield before the oppressors' power. I am not going to dilate upon our miraculous deliverance from Egypt; not upon the victory of Deborah over Siserah; not upon the slaughter of Senaherib's host; not upon the return of the captives under Ezra and Zerubabel; but I will only speak of the occasion of the festival of the Dedication *חנוכה* which we celebrate this day. In the outset, let me remark, that never was a more entire confidence in God, or a more heroic self-devotion, displayed at any period of our national existence, than at the time of the brave family of the Asmoneans.—The Jews who had returned from Babylon, by the express permission of the Persian king, Cyrus, lived securely and peaceably in their own land for many years, secured from foreign danger, by the protection of the powerful Persians, and in domestic peace, because they were guided by the word of God, and administered the holy law according to its letter and spirit. But at the downfall of the Persian monarchy, Alexander, of Macedon, became master of Judea, and after his death, it first fell to the share of one, then to that of another of his successors, till at last it remained with the king of Syria. It was about this time, that the philosophy of the Grecians exercised a very pernicious influence over some of our nation, who wished, foolishly, to be freed from the strict and, to them, burthensome regulations of the Jewish law; and, with regret, it must be confessed, that so great was the degeneracy of the people, that there could be found a man, who by bribery induced the cruel Antiochus Epiphanes, more properly called Epimanes, signifying the madman, to dispossess the virtuous Onias from the sacred office of high-priest; and having thus shown his contempt for the dignity he unworthily coveted, he exchanged his name of Joshua for the Greek one of Jason, imagining, perhaps, to acquire more of the favour of the tyrant the more he assimilated to the ruling nation, even as regards the name. But as the wicked generally lay the foundation of their own ruin, so did the unworthy priest of whom we are speaking; for a relative of his own, by the name of Onias, who had assumed the Grecian name of Menalaus, overbid him with the fickle despot, who accordingly dismissed Jason and installed Menalaus in Aaron's holy office. How great must have been the wicked-

ness of those days ; when the station, which had been intended as the portion of the wisest and best of all the servants of the altar, was sold by an alien to our blood, for money ; and the more so, as the sacred vessels of the temple were purloined to pay the bribe ; and as the virtuous Onias was slaughtered because he dared in holy and honest indignation to raise his voice against the sacrilege. Deeds of such unexampled impiety were but too well calculated to bring all the sacred ordinances of the law into disrepute, since the people at large could not help looking down with deserved contempt upon ministers stained with so many vices ; and there was, therefore, great danger that the community might be induced to throw off that worship, which they saw administered by men whom they were forced to regard with aversion for their misconduct ; and with jealousy too, at finding men elevated so much above them who were evidently not entitled to this elevation by a superior degree of moral excellence.—To increase this danger arising from a general laxity of principles, persecution added its terrors. For when Antiochus had gone to subjugate Egypt to his power, and it being reported that he had died, Jason endeavoured to repossess himself of the dignity of high-priest, which he had lost, as said already, by the treachery of Menalaus, and having obtained possession of his person he shut him up in the fortress of Acra. But Antiochus was not dead ; and hearing of the revolt of Jason, he construed it into a rebellion of the whole people ; he therefore marched against Jerusalem, and butchered, without remorse or pity, tens of thousands of the helpless inhabitants, and sold tens of thousands of free-born men into slavery. Yet even this excess of cruelty did not satisfy this bloody heathen king ; for superadded to his deeds of barbarity, he now began a war against the religion of the Lord ; he pillaged the temple, and desecrated the holy altar by commanding a swine to be sacrificed upon it ; there, where naught but offerings agreeable to our Father were to be brought ; where none but the righteous sons of Aaron were ever to officiate. Imagine to yourselves the horror which must have seized those Israelites who loved their God with all their heart, at seeing the desecration of whatever was the holiest of all things on earth : and then picture to yourselves, how grieved

they must have been, when finding that they had not the power to avert the evil, nor the strength to avenge themselves on their insolent oppressors. Though so much blood had already been shed, Antiochus's thirst for slaughter was not stilled; and he made the occasion of a defeat he suffered from the Romans a pretext for farther oppression of the Jews; and in fact he determined to exterminate the whole race. The tyrant found a ready instrument in one Apollonius, who, whilst the whole people were engaged in peaceful worship on a Sabbath-day in the city consecrated to the service of God, ordered his soldiers to fall upon the unresisting and defenceless multitude; and fearfully did the slaughter rage, for all the *males* were slain, till the streets were red with the streaming gore of uncounted victims, and the women were reserved even for a more cruel fate, for they were led away as captives into hopeless slavery.—Apollonius next broke down the walls of the city, pillaged it and set fire to it in many places; and to curb the indignant spirit of a brave people, he built a fortress on the highest part of mount Zion, to keep the city and temple under perpetual exposure from his irruptions. Thus the enemy silenced the voice of the holy worship, made the sacrifices cease, and cast the whole house of Israel, that yet remained, in mourning. As if not enough had yet been done, Antiochus commanded now, that all his subjects should conform to one mode of worship.—He prohibited the covenant of Abraham, interdicted the observance of the Sabbath, compelled many to eat the flesh of the swine, and, most horrible! a statue of an idol was, by his orders, erected on the altar of burnt-offerings, where the heathens then worshipped in the place of God's chosen priests!—Yet even this bitter persecution had its happy effects upon the Jews. Please to remember, brethren, what has been just said, that the philosophy and manners of the Grecians, who had obtained the mastery over all the countries bordering on Palestine, were beginning to be the cause of fearful apostacies; so much so indeed, that, as we have seen, two men, who possessed the dignity of high-priest, bought their offices from heathens, adopted heathen names, and introduced such customs, as were entirely opposed to the retired and virtuous mode of life recommended so strongly by the Bible.

We may, therefore, regard it as a special miracle, that the Jews were made to feel the tender mercies of the heathens, whose manners they had begun to adopt, and they could thus easily distinguish between the effects which the benign and tolerant precepts of the Mosaic code were intended to produce, and the consequences of the destructive and intolerant systems of paganism. There was now, moreover, an opportunity offered to those yet firm and true to their God, to display their constancy; and we must look back with a religious satisfaction upon the unflinching resignation of the martyrs, who suffered the most excruciating torments, rather than offend against the will of God. Well known is the history of Hannah's seven sons; also the noble resistance of the aged Eleazer, who embraced a glorious death, to teach the young how to die willingly in the defence of the holy law, when life can be purchased only by dishonouring it.—Thus, the ancient spirit of the people began to revive, amidst the persecutions which now had spread all over the country, like the elastic bow that recoils the more strongly, the stronger it has been bent; and it was this spirit of virtue and bold defiance of the oppressor's power, which was made the instrument of Divine Providence, for preserving the remnant of Israel from the fell sword of the idolater. There lived in the town of Modin, an aged man by the name of Mattathias, son of Yochanan, the high priest, famed for virtue and an ardent zeal for his religion, and father of five sons, worthy of such a parent; their names were: Yochanan, Simon, Judas, Eleazer, and Yonathan. It happened about this time, that an officer of Antiochus, Apelles, arrived at Modin, to enforce the king's decrees against the Jewish religion. It was of course to be expected, that a man of Mattathias's standing was to be brought over to the cause of idolatry by offers the most tempting; for then, as in later times, our adversaries thought it justifiable to bribe us into apostacy, when open force or persuasion would not succeed. But the venerable sage would not listen to the insidious proposals; he proclaimed aloud, that the faith which his fathers had acknowledged, was the one to which he would firmly adhere to the moment of his dissolution; nay, he even set the example of open resistance, as he slew, in the moment of holy zeal, an apostate Jew, who was

going to sacrifice to the idol; and in addition, the messenger of Antiochus fell by his hands. The sacred work once begun, he summoned the citizens to follow him, and in the mountain fastness they organized themselves; and rapidly the numbers of the defenders increased; and with prudence and unflinching courage they conducted their heroic enterprize, and they proceeded to overturn the heathen altars in many places, to enforce the observance of the law, and to re-establish the provincial places of meeting for public worship (the Synagogues), whilst the temple was yet in the hands of the Grecians. Mattathias had the happiness to behold the prosperous progress of the work of regeneration, and, crowned with immortal glory, he resigned the command to his son Judas, after which the aged warrior sunk into the arms of death, and was interred in his native city, Modin.

Judas, surnamed the Maccabee, was a successor worthy of his glorious parent, and he initiated his warriors by many a gallant deed of arms, by surprising fortified places and garrisoning them; and in this manner he secured to himself places of retreat in case of any misadventure. Having thus trained his small army, he at length advanced against the proud and confiding enemy in the open field, where he was met by Apollonius, governor of Samaria, whom he conquered and slew. Seron, another general of Antiochus, shared the same fate in a battle which he fought against Judas, to revenge the death of Apollonius. But Antiochus was not willing that the despised Jews should so easily regain their independence; he therefore sent an immense host to extinguish the people, whose laws he hated, and whose power he esteemed lightly. Nicanor, then, and Gorgias, and Ptolemy Macron, advanced against the feeble army of Judas with an army of forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse; and in their train followed a great number of slave-merchants, who were to purchase as many of the Israelites, as should be made captives, in order that their price should furnish the king with means to pay the arrears of the tribute due to the Romans. Vain imagination! for no booty, nor captives fell into their hands; but, overwhelmed with confusion, they were compelled to fly before the handful of those who shed their blood in the cause of God. Judas had assembled

six thousand men at Mitzpah, a city famed for the victory achieved over the Philistines, in former times, by the prophet Samuel, through his intercession with God, for the then equally oppressed people. According to the ancient and hallowed custom the men under Judas fasted here, and prayed fervently for protection from above, in their almost hopeless situation; and though his army was barely an eighth part of the Syrian host, Judas nevertheless made proclamation in obedience to the Mosaic law, that every one who had built a house, planted a vineyard, espoused a woman, or was afraid to meet the foe, should return home, and in consequence, but three thousand remained with the hero, to combat the forty-seven thousand of the enemy. But every breast of this little band was a fortified tower, and the enemy dared not hope to march to victory, but over the prostrate bodies of every one of the fearless defenders of the righteous cause. By a series of masterly manœuvres Judas overcame the troops of Gorgias, who were compelled to seek safety in flight. But in their success, the Jews did not forget the Disposer of all human events, and the following day, being Sabbath, they rested and returned their heartfelt thanks to our heavenly Father.—Another victory was soon after gained over another great army of the Syrians, in the country beyond Jordan; in consequence of which Nicanor, he who had advised that the *slave-dealers* should follow the army, was compelled to fly to Antioch, disguised as a *slave*; strange retribution, but how just! In the following year, Lysias, who had been appointed by the king to exterminate the Hebrew people, advanced with sixty thousand foot and five thousand horse, to which immense force Judas was able to oppose but ten thousand men; and yet he triumphed: for what could resist those, who did not fight for fame, nor wealth, but solely for the honour of their violated faith, and under the especial protection of the Almighty? It was after this battle that Judas was enabled to regain the desolate ruins of Jerusalem; but oh! who can paint the anguish of the people, when they found shrubs growing in the courts of the temple, and saw the walls of the sacred edifice defaced, and were conscious that every thing had been profaned by the unclean hands of the pagans? But they instantly commenced the work of purifica-

tion, reinstalled the expelled priests, rebuilt the altar, replaced the sacred vessels, which had been taken, out of the spoils which had fallen into their hands, and they celebrated the feast of *Dedication* for eight days, amidst universal rejoicing and thanksgiving. It is said, that as they re-entered the temple, they found that all the oil, appropriated for the service, had been defiled by the Syrians, except one cruet, sealed with the seal of the high priest, which, however, contained only enough for one day's supply. You must know, that according to the twenty-seventh chapter of Exodus, and the twenty-fourth of Leviticus, the oil for the service of the temple was to be pure, and especially destined for the purpose. It now came to pass, that the oil found in the cruet lasted for eight days, till a fresh supply could be procured. In commemoration of this, we light the Hanuckah lamps in all our dwellings, during the eight days of the festival of Consecration, which we are this day celebrating.

It is needless to pursue farther the account of the victories of the valiant Maccabee, as history, accessible to you all, has furnished us a detail of the facts. I only intended to sketch, as briefly as possible, the origin of the eight days of Hanuckah, and to point out to you the wonderful occurrences connected with them. We have seen how the heathens triumphed, how they satiated their fierce revenge, and how they glutted their desire for blood, whilst the trespasses of a great portion of the people justly devoted them to the vengeance denounced in the law. Again it has been shown, how the subsequent persecutions gave to the noble-minded amongst us an opportunity of proving how much they valued the sacred inheritance derived from their ancestors, and how gladly they resigned all, when life and security could be purchased only at the price of apostacy.—We have it also proved, how utterly unavailing were all the artifices of the foe to extirpate the religious feelings of the Jews, by all the means which his cruelty could devise, and how he was overcome and his great armies conquered, by the few who remained true to the belief of their ancestors.—Let us reflect—was this not a glorious proof of the Divine Protection—when the nation of Israel was preserved by apparently so inadequate physical means from amalgamation with the hea-



thens on the one hand, and extermination by countless swarms of warriors on the other?—Well might Israel say: “Full often have enemies pressed me hard from my youth, yet they did not overcome me; for the righteous Lord hewed asunder the bonds of the wicked.” And so it ever was. Age after age has looked with a jealous eye on the insignificant numbers of the Hebrews, and no artifice has been left untried to inveigle them to apostacy; yet the Jews remain a people before the Lord. The sword of persecution has been often unsheathed, but gladly did millions of victims stretch out their necks to receive the death-stroke, which sealed with their life’s blood their attachment to One God! The stake was kindled, and the children of Yeshurun were promised life and honour, if they would but swerve from their belief in a single article; but they exclaimed: “The Lord our God is the only Eternal Being!” and hastened into the embrace of a cruel death, as though they were hurrying to a great festival. Victim after victim was led forth, yet thousands were still ready to follow the holy example!—It is not to be denied, that human passions, unconnected with any thing sacred, may stimulate multitudes to sacrifice themselves for the sake of some cherished opinion. But where is that people which has suffered, with so much constancy as the Jews have done, the contumely of nations, the hatred of sovereigns, the derision of the worthless? Is this not suffering the rack and death in every man, in every woman, in every child of the people? And then let us consider, how steadfastly all was borne, how nobly we submitted to all, and to every one, of the many vexations in defence of the best gift of Heaven! And instead of advancing the political influence of their caste, as may have been the case with martyrs for other systems, the Israelites that died for their religion, never could hope for such a result; for there was no contest waged for superiority, there was no prospect of their death being avenged by their friends; for alas! our nation has been powerless for tens of centuries, and none but He above can be looked to as the avenger of the innocent blood. Besides the number of their followers could not be augmented by their heroic suffering; for we do not look for an outward increase, till the time of the Lord arrives; and if any thing their example would draw the line of separation

more broadly, and confine our people to their own members exclusively, as certainly the strict adherence of our martyred ones was nowise calculated to invite strangers, who had followed an easier and freer law, to the adoption of the Mosaic system. None, therefore, but the most prejudiced can deny, that the sacrifice of so many useful lives proves, that the Israelites conceived the law to be vital to their existence, that they considered mingling with the mass of mankind and coalescing with the nations, as a calamity to be avoided even at the expense of life; and consequently, as universal principles of right cannot be changed by circumstances and time, it must further be conceded, that at the present day too we are bound to follow their footsteps in so far as to maintain, at all hazards, the precepts and the supremacy of the code of Moses.

Yet it may be urged, although without much reason, that vigilance is not any longer called for, since, at the present moment, all persecution has ceased, since now Israel is no more exposed to hatred for opinion's sake, since the nations of the earth regard us with a more favourable eye, and since the bonds of thralldom are broken; and that therefore we may at the present day freely join with those around us, throw off antiquated customs, more suited to a less enlightened age, and assimilate in manners and in the language of public worship to the people among whom we live; in fact such reasoning would go far to break down the uniformity of rule and language which has hitherto, and for so long a period, prevailed among the Jews. But hear me, brethren, hear me you who are descended from the patriarchs, and remark what I say, that this very state of fancied security is the most hurtful to our independence as a religious community. Understand me, I do not say, that we should, even if we could, separate our interests from those of the nations under whose protection we so happily enjoy security, under whose shadow we advance so firmly in the path of science and the noble unfolding of the mind; for we are commanded by God, through the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, "to seek the peace of the city in which we live;" and it has accordingly always been our custom, in every country where we were permitted to rest for a while to recruit our strength and to refresh our weary limbs, to pray for the welfare of the

government and the administrators of justice. Nevertheless, a sense of duty now demands of me to admonish you, my brethren, to beware of losing sight of the holy law, by which alone you can prosper. Think you, that because there is no actual persecution, we are therefore safe from all attacks? Is there no cause for firmly maintaining the law, because no crusades are preached up against us? Alas! candour and truth compel me and every thinking man to say, that only the weapons have been changed, but that the system itself is yet the same it was three thousand years ago, when Pharaoh endeavoured to repress the growth of the Israelites by hard labour! Believe me, brethren, that the Jew, as such, is an object of hatred and even contempt to almost every other individual of the human family. The infidel, who is regardless of every system of religion, will ridicule you for observing precepts which he avers to be founded in error; and the zealot for any other of the systems under which men live will pity you for being nothing but blind Jews, even if your acts are such as every one must acknowledge to be the most laudable; the most worthy of our people are commiserated for belonging to no better people than the Jews, as though there could be a name more honourable for antiquity and virtue, or any nation in possession of more elevated maxims of piety than the Jewish people! The consequences of this spirit of intolerance show themselves from time to time in the efforts which are made to bring the Jews to apostacy, either by direct bribes, or by inducements that offices and honourable preferment should be given as the price for an outward change of faith. Add to this, that the courtesy now shown us has unfortunately induced too many already to relax from the severity of the burdens of the law; and by mixing too freely with other nations some have learned and adopted their manners, and occasionally we witness an entire family\* leaving the apparently austere precepts of Moses, and joining themselves to the more easy systems of others. Is not this a state which demands the serious attention of every

\* In thus stating my opinion, I do not mean a public embracing of other tenets only, but also such acts as place the agents or their descendants beyond the pale of the Jewish Church; such as intermarriage with gentiles, and a total neglect of the law.

Jew, who is so in sincerity? Have not our enemies predicted, that in the course of a century the Jewish name would die away in the countries where we enjoy affluence, by gradually amalgamating with the nations amongst whom we reside? Are the Israelites willing to contribute with all their might to the fulfilment of this libellous prediction? Shall indeed the day arrive, when it could be said with truth—"Israel has ceased to be?" I, for my part, fear not that anything of the kind will ever take place; for the Almighty will (according to his promise) avert the danger in his own good time, and just as in the days of the Maccabee, persecution will ensue as a punishment for our transgressions, to teach us that we have incurred the displeasure of Heaven, if security will make us forgetful of our duty. And have we not examples innumerable that persecution or banishment always followed in the train of a relaxation from the observance of the law? Why then will you, avoiding the fellowship of your brethren, imitate and flatter people, whose opinions and yours ought never to become alike by a surrender of your own principles; and what is more, why should you think of doing an acknowledged evil when all your endeavours to effect it will and must utterly fail? And think you, that persecution will never more raise its head? Imagine you, that the state of advancement which many nations have reached in civilization will for ever preclude the recurrence of the scenes witnessed from the barbarity of the inquisition? We should pray to Heaven, that this might be so; but still we cannot rest in perfect security, whilst we are regardless of the duties to our God. It seems fatal to us Jews to depart therefrom, and during the whole of our existence, we have ever found, that those nations even, that were, from the nature of their worship, friendly to every system of polytheism, always regarded with aversion, and persecuted too very often, the followers of One God; so that concessions will on the one hand draw down upon us the just indignation of Divine Providence, and will not on the other gain for us the paltry favour of the gentiles, even if it could in the slightest degree be valued against the positive loss we incur by offending the Lord. Menelaus, when he purloined the sacred vessels of the temple, no doubt thought that the purchase of the office of high-priest through sacrilege from the heathens

would have no evil consequences; the people of those days perhaps imagined, that the imitation of the customs of the Greeks, which favoured the pursuit of pleasure so much more than the retired manners of the Jews, would produce only the happiest result: and yet we have seen, in the brief sketch just given, how near these same causes brought the children of Israel to the very brink of extirpation. Let this then operate as a solemn admonition on all who may feel inclined to yield the strict discipline of the Mosaic law; for (let me repeat it) by this alone we can be safe! Do you think that the injunction against the marrying of persons who are not Jews is a mere arbitrary precept? Do you think, that the forbidden meats, and the strict attention to be given to those that are allowed, are mere superstitious ordinances? Credit me, brethren, that both and similar other laws are the very safeguard to our existence; and that it is the very distance which the strict observance of our rules interposes between us and others, which has so miraculously preserved us entire during so many ages of darkness and oppression. And shall it be said, that we threw off the burden of the law, as soon as we could find a convenient opportunity to do so? May that be the last day of peace to Israel, when this shall be true; may punishment upon punishment again be poured out to teach us the way of righteousness, and may the bitterness of wormwood and the cup of wrath again be presented to our lips, until we return and seek the Lord. Brethren! let me call upon you to consider well your relation to your Maker; and let the reflection, which must be awakened within you on this day, devoted to the celebration of the service of the Lord restored by your ancestors, and of their exertions made in defence of the righteous faith, stimulate you to imitate, as far as lies within your power, their noble example of self-devotion. They left their homes, they relinquished the pleasures of a city life, the enjoyment of domestic happiness, in short every thing that renders life agreeable, and resorted to mountain fastnesses, and there exposed their lives hourly to the most imminent peril. Be it then also your study to deny to yourselves those pleasures, to abstain from those enjoyments, to avoid those meetings, which run counter to the letter and spirit of our law; for in this careful abstinence only can you, in these days of allurements and

general intercourse, preserve in purity the blessed legacy of your forefathers. All this can also be accomplished without the least illiberality towards your friends of another belief. Love them as yourselves, assist them in their necessities, administer comfort to them when they are afflicted, watch over them when they are sick, clothe their naked ones, feed their hungry, and bury their dead; for this universal love is demanded of you by the God who benignantly watches over all his creatures. Nay more, you must not pride yourselves at being Jews, nor despise others for being less enlightened in the true religion; but only be thankful, that it pleased the Almighty to make you his own people. Condemn no man for his belief, for you cannot know to whom the Lord may have decreed deserved happiness. Besides all this, you should never attempt—if not in defence of your own principles—to weaken any man's belief in his received opinions, nor try to undermine any general custom, unless you find the one or the other injurious to the peace of society at large, for to this you are bound to contribute whatever you may be able to effect. Such a system as this is certainly not one founded upon illiberality, nor based upon superstition and bigotry; and acting up to it moreover will in nowise tend to abstract you in the least from your religion, for the strictest observance of the Bible can be coupled with universal philanthropy; and, let me add, that no true religion has taken root in the heart of him who looks, from inward pride at his own superiority, with contempt upon his fellow-men. And the affected fear which some feel to acknowledge their being Jews is truly ridiculous. For why should you be afraid to avow your attachment to Judaism? Why should the dread of ridicule deter you from doing those duties which ages of persecutions and hardships endeared to your ancestors? There are doubtlessly some among my hearers, who are descended from those glorious martyrs who suffered but so recently all the terrors and pains which a bigoted priesthood, working upon a superstitious and ignorant populace, could invent. If then the children of these martyrs are here, let them reflect for what purpose their progenitors suffered; and let them act as becomes children of such parents, by following the dictates of that law which they acknowledged up to the moment of their being taken hence,

when they were relieved from those severe tortures, which their bodies were no longer able to endure! You, who have come hither from a foreign land, perhaps for the sake of escaping the odium attached in many countries to our name, show by your devotion to the holy law, in a land where you are at liberty to worship your God in the manner He commanded you without fear of interruption, that you are deserving of all the favours which can be bestowed on mortals. And you, who were born in this country, who never felt the want of liberty of conscience, reflect that every Israelite, even the one who bears the insult and maltreatment of some African or Asiatic despot, is your brother, and that you owe obedience to the same law which guides him, and in defence of which he is perchance suffering imprisonment and stripes, whilst you walk at large in ease and affluence!

I am afraid that I have detained you too long already upon this subject, but I thought the present occasion one every way proper to communicate to you the occurrences of olden times, and the reflections which naturally flow from their consideration. I hope that the lesson taught by the wonderful event detailed to you will sink deeply in your hearts, and that you may ever be animated by a holy zeal, be ever ready to meet every danger, rather than transgress the will of God. If you should sacrifice property and life even in this cause, you may rest assured that the everlasting Father can and will compensate you a thousand fold for every suffering and privation; and remember that—"The name of the Lord is a strong tower to which the righteous runs and is protected."

May the protection of the Almighty be always extended over you, and may you, living in his fear, be ever exempt from all suffering and trouble. Amen.

Kislev 22d. }  
December 8th. } 5591.

## DISCOURSE XII.

## THE FEAR OF LOSS.

LORD of the Universe, from whom all blessings, which every being enjoys, emanate, bless us in thy grace, and bestow on us the choicest gifts of thy goodness and bounty ; and grant, that each and every one of thy children be able to acquire a maintenance, without needing the assistance of one another, or that of a foreign people ; so that they may, living by thy bounty solely, devote their lives to thy service. Amen.

## BRETHREN !

Among the causes which tend to withhold man from the pursuit of religion, the fear of incurring temporal loss stands pre-eminent ; especially if his circumstances should compel him to seek his bread by daily labour. Such a one will refuse to rest on the Sabbath, under the plea that he is unable to pretermit his work one or two days every week, since his unremitted toil will barely furnish him with a livelihood. He acts and speaks as though it were his exertions, aided by his ingenuity, which could secure him against want ; he forgets his dependence on a higher Power, and he places not an undivided confidence in Providence, who “in giving life,” as our wise men express it, “will also provide food.” And if you speak to one of this class about his religious duties, he will tell you, that his circumstances forbid his observing them ; that an attendance at the house of God would expose him to too great a loss of time and money ; others more favoured than he may find it convenient to give charity and to assist the poor, but that he ought to be exempt from the burthen of troubling himself about other people’s wants. He will not, however, confess, even to himself, that there is aught blame-worthy in his conduct ; for he almost invariably flatters himself with the opinion, that God will not look with displeasure upon one who honestly endeavours to pursue his calling, and withholds not from the



humblest individual his just dues. And should a man, like this, even say, that he will do better when his circumstances improve, it is highly probable that this period will never arrive; for if he should amass uncounted wealth, and be blessed with whatever his heart desires, he will still find a new set of excuses to suit his more improved condition; and death may close his life, before he has arranged, much less carried into execution, the proposed plans for his self-amelioration. This eagerness for wealth, and this fear of being poor have been a prevailing cause of much irreligion at all times, and our daily experience teaches us, that many, alas! yield all their energies to the obtainment of the coveted worldly blessings; and though often advised of the nothingness of gold, though exhorted to seek for higher riches, the race for aggrandizement is still pursued by the many; the path of real virtue trod by but few devoted spirits. I may, therefore, be asked, what is the good to be derived from public exhortations—what effect can a moralist look for from telling the world of their failings? Or, I may be told, that as the sinner will do as he pleases, and as it is needless to provoke his resentment, it were much better to let every one pursue his own way, without attempting to interfere with him. To all these and similar objections against the utility of public addresses in our places of worship, I wish to put in the following plea, trusting that the candid will see therein, a perfect justification of the task I have, though unusual at present among us, voluntarily assumed, and in which I hope to be able to persevere with the blessing of Heaven. I know full well, that there is no mode of convincing any one of the necessity of being a strict Israelite, if the sacred volume does not speak to his heart; if he does not feel in his inmost soul that every precept it contains, is obligatory upon him in consequence of its being an edict of the Supreme Wisdom; moreover it is no secret to me, that but little favour can be gained by the exposition of any fault to which a community or any member thereof may be addicted. Yet do I think it my duty to teach fearlessly what our law says concerning the neglect of the divine precepts, be the cause sordid avarice or forgetfulness of our obligations to God; hoping to be able at least to rouse a spirit of reflection in some, if I cannot

even convince all of the justness of the views, which, as an Israelite, I honestly entertain; and trusting that my feeble admonitions may be made the instrument of bringing back, one day, (though none of us may live to see it) a few to the pale of our holy faith: and should this even not come to pass, to make the memory of those glorious men more respected, who have gone down to the tomb, after having all their lives adhered strictly, and paid unflinching obedience, to the statutes which were handed down as an inheritance to the congregation of Jacob. Whilst on the subject let me state in this place, once for all, that no allusion shall ever be made to any person in particular, as *manners* and not *men* are alone fit subjects for our inquiries; but at the same time, sins shall always be condemned, no matter who the sinners are. This much I would desire you to bear in mind, that, as I deem personalities unfit to be introduced in moral lectures, and as any such allusions should be carefully avoided: nothing, whatever, that I may have to advance in the course of the addresses I may make to you, should be looked upon in a light as though I were desirous to harrow up, wantonly, the feelings of any one of my hearers. If any there are, to whom a portion of what is said should happen to apply; if they so feel it within themselves: let them—not blame the preacher who is anxious for their improvement—but ponder well on the doctrines advanced; let the admonitions be the means of causing them to search well into their conduct; of noting every, or any particular act of their life; and if they find themselves in the wrong, let them mend their course speedily, whilst yet the vigour of youth or the strength of manhood remains; whilst yet they have the mastery over their inclinations; before decrepid old age, or long-indulged vicious habits have made sin their second nature; before the forgetfulness of all moral obligation has nearly extinguished all hopes of amendment.—This short explanation I conceived to be necessary, fearing lest some persons might take offence or exception against an inadvertantly uttered thought, spoken without viewing previously all the bearings my hearers might give to it. I, therefore, now solemnly declare, that any imputation, or inference, as though I intended to give offence wilfully to any human being, is entirely unfounded;

since I would think myself debased, were I to use my station as a public teacher, to carry malice towards any one of my hearers into the house dedicated to the service of God.

Having said, accidentally, thus much on the scope of my intended remarks, let us resume the subject with which we commenced. It was stated that the fear of temporary loss, is one of the chief causes which render men irreligious. It is therefore proper, that we trace this fear, and endeavour to show its futility, and to prove that if even it be well founded, there are thousand other considerations which should prevent us from ever allowing it to influence our conduct.—The wavering man, or he who has already thrown off the burden of restraint which religion must of necessity impose—since faith merely, without acts, is not the religion of the Israelites—will always require some other than mere spiritual advantages to incite him to practise religious obligations, or in other words, one who is not convinced of the necessity and paramount obligation of the law of God will rarely, if ever, appear religious unless his worldly advantages are actually, or expected to be, augmented thereby. These may consist, in an actual accession of wealth, the name of a thorough-good man, or the fear of public censure. If one pretends to piety from the two first motives, he is a hypocrite, since he does that for gain or fame which has not a sufficiently strong hold on his conviction, to be viewed as a duty; with the last mentioned motive, however, the fear of censure, a man may not be totally lost to all holy sensations, as the fear he entertains of men may preserve him, perhaps, from doing any thing absolutely wrong, even in secret, since the habit of practising the good publicly may, by degrees, teach him to dispense with the evil altogether, and if this should not be entirely so, it may be calculated on at least to a considerable extent. Persons of this kind, pious from fear, can only be found in communities, where the majority are, in truth and without ostentation, devoted to the observance of the law; for unless one is actually debased at heart, he will readily join in with his fellows, although he be not persuaded of the absolute necessity of their conduct. The hypocrite too, will commonly make his appearance, where the many are religious, though amongst a community of

irreligious persons too he may assume the outward appearance of sanctity, the better to conceal his wickedness, till his ends be obtained.—But, generally speaking, if a man not absolutely convinced of the truth of revelation is placed where his interest would be better subserved by disregarding the divine precepts: we shall find, that he will seek his worldly gain as paramount to every other consideration, and the hypocrite, as well as the pious from habit merely, will then disregard his former practices; and the one from wantonness, the other from apprehension of loss, will leave religion as something which has no claim to his attention.—To one, who assumes the garb of religion only to forward his plans of wickedness, or to promote his interest, but little can be said to awaken his mind to a review of his conduct, unless we could demonstrate to him, that punishment will, to a certainty and inevitably, follow from above as the consequence of sin, even if no human vengeance should ever be exerted against his crimes. Yet, this is almost impossible to prove to the obdurate; for tell him that the book of God has so recorded it, and he will ridicule that openly, which he disbelieves secretly; tell him of examples, even those which came under your own observation, and he will say, that it was all the effect of chance, and that you were misled by the coincidence merely to suppose it the work of a special Providence; madman! as though the actual occurrence of these strange coincidences from time to time did not prove in the strongest manner the existence and the exercise of an especial watchfulness by the Creator!—Therefore, to him who neglects to obey God's word from a feeling of contempt towards it, or to him who uses it merely as an outward cloak, we shall not at present address ourselves; but we will only turn to him, who is neglectful of his religion from an actual apprehension of too great a loss, and upon whom public opinion has not influence enough to make him pursue the path of righteousness.

Fallen brother! thou fearest to suffer loss by obeying thy God; thou weenest, that thou art bound to endeavour to shield thyself against want, even at the expense of the duties thou owest to thy Maker; perhaps thou art at this very moment, striving to convince thyself by false and specious excuses, that thou violatest no immutable and eternal principal of right by

thy present conduct! But thou errest; thou lookest upon the confused outlines merely, which thy imperfect vision presents to thee, of the real state of existence, and hence thy mistaking the false for the true—the unimportant for the vitally essential—and the means for the object!—Yes, brethren and friends, it is only by this misplacing the unholy in the room of the holiest thing in existence, that a man can desire temporal goods in preference to being religious, and that sordid avarice can, as it were, push the unwary wanderer in the abyss of eternal destruction, which yawns unseen beneath his feet.—In the first place, let us view the real extent of the apprehended temporal loss, by which is generally understood, the not-acquiring or not-retaining of as much money, or that for which money can be obtained, as another of our fellow-men has acquired, or is in process of obtaining. Those now disposed to transgress aver, that their business must suffer if they are strict in the observance of the laws; because so many days must be spent in idleness, which could be profitably employed; and so much capital must be laid out in charity, the Synagogue and the support of religion in general, which brings no return whatever. But this is evidently an empty excuse, since so many who were good Jews from their infancy, who never profaned the day of rest; who never suffered the hungry to go from their doors unfed; who never permitted the naked to remain unclothed; who never neglected to pay the duties which our holy law demands to be exercised towards the sick and dead—I say, pious men are not necessarily doomed to indigence, since so many of them have risen from an humble beginning, to immense affluence and distinction! What then is there in these things to deter us from practising them? Nothing—but our own idle fears,—nothing but hateful envy at the success of a neighbour, which causes us to strain every nerve to become of equal importance with him in the arbitrary scale of rank, which the vain, the conceited, and the ignorant have always been at so great pains to establish.—It is, moreover, by no means ascertained, even to the satisfaction of the transgressors themselves, that their wealth is actually augmented, or their standing in society raised by their irreligious practices; and yet the few examples of transgressors becoming rich or respectable are constantly

held up as excuses for others to do likewise, as though they could prove, that the ways of sin are pleasant, when the unreasonableness of such argument must be self-evident.—But let us now for one moment grant, that the object in view, the pursuit of wealth and fame, can be best attained in the way of sin, what then at last is the ultimate gain?—Riches! Honour!—O God! that these baubles should be powerful enough to mislead so many unthinking, and some even reflecting, minds! Riches?—If those in humble circumstances were but to know how much gilded misery there is existing—if they could but once look at the true nature of wealth, masked by a fair appearance—if they could but once be convinced, that no real satisfaction is ever obtained by the possession of the utmost desires of the imagination:—they would assuredly cease to crave so inordinately that which is once for all beyond their reach; and those treasures, which the All-wise Dispenser has denied them, would then assuredly remain unsought.—Riches? Yes, look at that man, who has become great by the success of his business; gold and silver are his in plenty, houses, fields, slaves, and cattle he possesses: and yet has he enough?—no, his toil is the same it was years ago, when he was miserably poor, for his grovelling nature knows not how to be contented, his avarice is not yet satisfied, and he will hardly allow himself or his family any of the indulgencies which wealth can purchase, not because he dislikes such enjoyments, but only because he is afraid they will impoverish him, that is, diminish his hoard to some small extent.—Riches? Oh, name not the delusive word with the fervour with which it is generally pronounced; for riches are but the empty shadow, the deceiving light, which vanish whilst you grasp them, which are ineffectual when you lean on them for support. And although short my number of years, and not extensive my experience, I have seen that which must have called up thought in the most thoughtless, had he too witnessed it. It was once, that I was summoned to the dying bed of a rich man—he lay an object of commiseration, such an object as would have moved the heart of the most unfeeling with pity; his foaming mouth, his lack-lustre eyes evidently betokened him a speedy food for worms, and the wretched appointments of his couch seemed to say, that

his labours for gold had been for others, not for himself; and what availed him his riches? nothing—for to alleviate his dreadful sufferings merely,—to smooth for him the descent to death—was beyond the power of all medical skill, and the leveller only of all human distinctions was able to relieve him from his misery—misery of which he himself was unconscious, for the latter years of his life had been shrouded by total mental darkness.—And is it for this, that we should never cease from labour? is this the noble end for which all our faculties should be exerted? is there nothing else besides for which we are to live?—I grant, that if our existence—our life—our being—were limited to the brief three-score-and-ten—the short span of our days on earth—it would be unwise to check the counsel of cupidity, if this cupidity were strong enough to make us believe, that if blest with money we should have in our possession the highest good we are capable of attaining. But how stands the case, if we take the light of revelation to examine thereby the dark intricacies of human life? We are there told, that the soul does not die, that the human spirit is a portion breathed into man as a living undying spark, in fact, that the real essence of man is not composed of dust and matter and that this essence, this spark divine, is to be rewarded or punished according as the deeds done in the flesh may render it worthy or unworthy in the sight of the Righteous Judge in heaven, before whom no concealment is possible, before whose unerring wisdom no false excuses can avail! Why then, should we be so insatiable after wealth? can it plead our justification at the day of judgment? will it open to us the gates of heaven, if it has only been acquired to be hoarded up to uncounted thousands? Wo! wo! on the silly delusion that can blind a rational being to such an extent, as to cause him to grasp at a shadow, and to exclaim madly: “I have caught the substance!”

Honour? Is this not an object worth seeking? no more than riches; for ask the student, who has been striving for academical honours, after his brow is encircled with the wreath of victory—ask him, if his idol, that which he so ardently craved, is of that great value after it is gained: and he will say, that much more is yet to be desired, and that had he known how little satisfaction he should derive from his declared

superiority over his fellows, he would never have sacrificed his health at the shrine of ambition. For see, his eye is sunken; the bloom of youth which once glowed on his healthful cheek—the gay step—the manly bearing—the vigour of health—are all flown, and he has now open before him the prospect of premature decay, before yet he has had time to carry into effect one plan even of his proud ambition!—Ask the placeman, he who through a long life has basked in the sunshine of public favour, if he is blest according to his wishes: and he will answer you, that a long life of anxiety, of continual vigilance, of abuse by opponents—of insufficient aid by friends—of fear of losing the office in which one has been efficient and energetic—can never be repaid by any honours in the power of man to confer, and that only a sense of shame or pride, or perhaps necessity, produced by having long since yielded more profitable, though more humble employment, has for many a long day been the only motive which prevented him from withdrawing into retirement.—Ask the author, whose works have been perused by admiring millions; ask the orator, the poet, and the philosopher, if the meed of praise they have received, gratifies fully their morbid appetite: and you will be told, that happiness is not theirs.—Ask him, who on many an embattled plain has met the foeman with unflinching bravery; whose search for renown was ever unchecked by the fear of an instant death; whom the phantom glory led on from battlement to battlement, unswayed by opposing thousands; ask him, if the laurel crown, which covers his brow, sits easy there: and he will answer in the bitterness of his spirit, that despite of toil, of fatigue and dangers overcome, of praise and rewards heaped upon him—he is as far removed\* from happiness, as on that day, when he first set out roused by his country's call, with his youthful heart beating anxiously with joy and anticipation at the prospect of glory before him.—These are the fruits of riches and honour,—these are the true consequences of all that man values as his highest earthly goods.—And can

\* A Napoleon died an exile on a distant rock in the ocean—Louis the Desired was beheaded—the restored Charles X. is an exile—and a Wellington, the deliverer of his country, was pelted by a mob, that once almost adored him. Are other examples needed?



these be the only trophies which shall remain after our death, the sole memorials of our having been once here? are these the noble objects for which we are to live? were we placed here by the Deity for no other purpose? did He create us, that we should neglect all other pursuits?—It is true, that a moderate share of ambition, a due desire to possess, should be cultivated; for whilst in this life, activity has been assigned to us by our Maker, as one of the best virtues; but as these feelings were intended for a holy purpose, we should confine them within the limits of the holy law, and be extremely cautious, that our pursuits of wealth or renown may in nowise interfere with the duties which we primarily owe to the Creator. We should, therefore, be satisfied with the portion of riches and of honour which our honest and religious exertions can procure, and if we cannot in this manner become rich and inordinately great, we should reflect, that, as the Psalmist says:

טוב מעט לצדיק מהמון רשעים רבים :

“Better is a little for the righteous, than the great riches are to the many sinners!” Psalm xxxvii. 16.

For man can be satisfied and contented, and even more so, with a small competency, than with a great mass of wealth; for he has not then the cares of losing such great hoards to disturb him, which agitate even the wealthiest in the hour of success, for no man can be secure in his possessions against all contingencies that can arise. And again, it seldom happens, perhaps never, that good moral and religious conduct will deprive a man of his daily bread; and this is enough for necessity, more is but superfluous.—It is no doubt true, that if we are rich, we are more able to bestow charity, to relieve the sick, and to do other acts of mercy; again, if we are more honoured in the opinion of the world, we can assist the oppressed better with our countenance and support, than otherwise. All this is true; but then we should consider, that it must be wrong to commit any sin, any thing bad in the eyes of God to attain these objects of virtue; for observe, none of you is bound to give the smallest trifle in the way of charity, if he, in order to give it, would be compelled to steal it first; thus

charity becomes a duty only then, when we have something to give, and if we cannot give, our Maker will not require it; for if it had been his wish that we should exert ourselves in this particular virtue, He would have given us the means, by prospering our undertakings at the periods allotted to us by Him for labour.—If we find, therefore, that we cannot become rich and renowned in the ways of religion, we should choose to live poor and unhonoured rather than transgress; for we shall then have the consciousness at least of having merited the grace of God, and this consciousness, this holy satisfaction, will calm for us the storms of life, and make joyful for us the hour of death: and are these not objects worth attaining, more than gold and silver? which should man prefer, the peace within or the senseless glitter without?

Having thus answered the vague fears of the wavering, let us next examine, whether it is true that no immutable principle of right is encroached upon by irreligion.—Persons, determined to transgress, generally plead in the first instance, that *necessity* compels them, and in the second, that there is no harm in what they do. Now, the cases, where necessity really exists, are of very rare occurrence; but when they actually do arise, and only then, transgression may be extenuated, but never completely justified. As, however, necessity, at least absolute and unavoidable necessity, can from its very nature be of but short duration (for it would be wonderful, if a man were to be compelled by outward circumstances to act unavoidably in one way all his life or a greater portion of it): it follows, that if any thing like the transgression, done under the pressure of circumstances, be continued to be done when the pressure is wholly or in part removed, it cannot be justified under the same plea, and consequently, that which was at first excusable has now become a deed of wanton iniquity. Let us state an example: A man journeys in the wilderness with a caravan that travels on the Sabbath; if he were to remain behind by himself, it is but too probable that he would never reach the place of his destination, unless by a miracle especially wrought in his favour. This then, presents a case of necessity, and the traveller is therefore excused from resting on the respective Sabbaths, whilst he continues in the wilderness with the cara-

van; but as soon as he returns home, or arrives at an inhabited country, he is obliged to rest, the necessity for the violation being no longer in existence. At the same time, it must be observed, that although the traveller in the desert is permitted to move from his place on the Sabbath, he is nevertheless not allowed to do any kind of work, since the necessity does not extend farther than to the particular act of removal.—If then, a man pleads necessity to lull his conscience, let him beware, that the imagination be not resorted to, to supply the principal features; for otherwise, his sinning will be unqualified and wilful transgression.—Secondly, as to the other excuse: When blaming a man for not being strict in ceremonial observances, we are often met by the questions: “Do you not call him a good man? does he not pay his debts? is he not charitable? is he not, in short, careful of observing all those duties which can be called the immutable and eternal principles of religion?” You will observe here, brethren, that as long as a man is honest and charitable, he is supposed, by the general run of men, to have done all that can be demanded of him. It remains, therefore, to be inquired; “What constitutes a good man? what are the immutable principles of religion?” To these questions we answer: that a good man is he, who, in all his doings, looks to the law of God for his guide,—does not offend against either the ceremonial or moral ordinances of the same, and acts thus from motives of love and fear of God, without ostentation or worldly interest. One, who does not act up to this standard, cannot, strictly speaking, be considered in a more favourable view, than as having more or less good traits in his character; but a good man he is not.—If now there be no one, who acts altogether correctly in the majority of instances, we can with propriety call no one good, although it must be maintained, that men there are, who actually deserve the name, as far as weak mortals can ever be entitled to it.—Next, as to what are immutable truths? We answer, that every law,—every precept in the Bible, is an immutable truth in reference to an Israelite, of which he is bound to practise as much as he possibly can. If there were any difference between one precept and the other, it could be from no other reason, than that one should have proceeded from a source more eternal and more

immutable than the other.—But, what *is* the fact? Evidently that all the commandments have sprung from the same source, in evidence of which I tender you the *ten commandments*. In a preceding discourse, I have proved, that human wisdom, unaided by the word of God, cannot lay claim to have invented one single item of any moral law, but that all the systems which regulate civilized society have proceeded from, and are based upon the Decalogue, or, as it may be, upon revelation antecedent to the period of their promulgation. It is, therefore, unnecessary to enlarge upon the same argument again in this place, and to prove the divine authority of the law; I say, therefore, that to establish the sanctity of all the laws, I will offer you the ten commandments in evidence. There we see placed side by side: “I am the Lord thy God;” with “Thou shalt not murder;” “Thou shalt have no other Gods besides me;” with “Thou shalt not commit adultery;” “Thou shalt not bear the name of God in vain;” with “Thou shalt not steal;” “Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;” with “Thou shalt not bear false evidence;” “Honour thy father and thy mother;” with “Thou shalt not covet.” In this arrangement we must discover, that the Almighty did not draw the least distinction between one commandment and the other; what then confers authority upon any one of us, or even upon us all collectively, to assert, that one religious duty is more necessary than the other? Perhaps, it may be said, that the ordinances recorded on the second table, are to be styled more immutable than the others, because they relate to the peace of society; but this objection is as little founded in reason as the preceding ones. For even admit, that civil laws deserve, according to their nature, more regard than mere ceremonial laws, still it is to be shown in what way the former can really have hold upon the public mind, if not in connexion with the service, the love and fear of God.—Consider, brethren, what makes us observe any law or regulation whatever, which lays some restraint upon our conduct,—say even the laws of etiquette—evidently, either the fear of punishment, or the expectation of reward.—Now, if we think, that one principle of the law is more binding than the other, it follows, that the infraction of the minor principle will not bring any evil consequence, or at worst, the punish-

ment will be much slighter than for the non-observance of the greater duty. Let this idea once prevail, let us once imagine, that the Almighty will look with indifference or complacency upon sin of any kind, and the consequence must be, that any excuse whatever will suffice to seduce us to sin. Once tell the world, that one sin will be punished, the other not, and you make men believe, that *every act* will pass unheeded of heavenly vengeance; and where there is no punishment for transgression, there can be no reward for observing, and you thus break down every motive for piety and morality, And suppose now, that a man is in a situation, where he is next to sure, that detection is beyond probability, and that the gain to be derived from offending against what are called the laws of society counterbalances every consideration which the fear of accidental discovery can raise within him: what will operate here to restrain him from violating these very immutable laws of morality? have you not told him, or at least induced him to think, that divine vigilance need not be feared—for if this is to be feared, why should the non-observance of the Sabbath be not equally incurring God's displeasure as want of honesty—since both are spoken of in the same Decalogue? We must, therefore, conclude, relying upon the divine origin of the Mosaic code, that the laws of worship, as well as those of society, are equally holy, equally binding, and equally beneficial.—If then, we once admit, that the possession of a competency is all that is necessary for man, if we acknowledge, that it is sinful to endeavour to acquire riches and honour at the expense of religion: it will follow, that it is our duty, and as reasonable beings we are compelled, to regard as holy, and to practise all the principles of the Israelitish law, if even they should cause us temporal loss and inconvenience. Yes, brethren! discard the injurious counsels of avarice from your bosom, no matter in what shape it may present itself to entice you into evil; and believe at all times and under all circumstances in the word of promise, spoken through the mouth of the sweet Singer of Israel:

נער הייתי גם זקנתי ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב וזרעו  
מבקש לחם : תהלי לוי כה' :

“I have been young, have also grown old, but I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or his children begging for bread.” Psalms xxxvii. 25.

If then you are blessed with riches, you will be humble, if you have little, you will be contented; but if poverty and distress should have been decreed to you by the Merciful One, do not, I entreat you, throw off his yoke; for be assured, that if you suffer for your sins—for the good also occasionally err—in this life, you will be more deserving of dwelling after your decease, in everlasting happiness, in the presence of the Eternal Majesty.

May God's blessing attend you now and for ever. Amen.

Tebeth 27th. }  
January 12th. } 5591.

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### DISCOURSE XIII.

#### THE FESTIVAL OF PURIM.

To the ever-kind Father of his people, who has so often displayed his mercy to his children, be praise and glory, from now to all eternity! Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

If we examine the occurrences of life, and search into the causes of the events with which our experience has made us familiar, we will often find, that the best laid plans were frequently frustrated by small causes, and that, no matter how much a man had guarded every avenue of his enterprise, some mischance or other yet crept in to mar the entire structure of his brain. All experience therefore proves, that no one is safe against the evils which beset human life, and that, however

exalted, every child of Adam is liable to the same misfortunes as the humblest and meanest of our species. Many a one perhaps consulted the experience of past ages, obtained the assistance of the powerful and wise, and employed all the strength and ingenuity of his own towering genius: and yet the event disappointed his high expectations, and he was compelled to yield his enterprise before he had even approached the desired consummation. Nothing, consequently, is more firmly established by thousands of examples, than the words of Solomon in the book of Proverbs (xvi. 33):

בְּחִיק יוֹטֵל אֶת הַגּוֹרֵל וּמֵה' כֹּל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ : מִשְׁלֵי טוֹ' לַג' :

“In the lap the lot is thrown, but the decision comes from the Lord.”

And well it is that thus the faculties of man are organized by God, that thus his sphere of action is limited by Superior Power; for if it were permitted to the good to lay plans for the improvement of their fellow-beings, and to execute them with uniform good success: the same power to do evil would of necessity then belong to the wicked, and they would thus triumphantly do their deeds of mischief, unless a special providence of God should interpose at the consummation of any deed of wickedness to prevent any evil to accrue therefrom. But as it now is, that man cannot calculate with certainty upon the issue of any event, since the whole future is alike hidden from all: the good can attempt their works of kindness and rely with a well-founded hope upon the assistance of God; and no man need fear too greatly the power of the sinners, seeing that their fate is controlled by the same kind Being, who manifested himself to his adorers as the Almighty God, and as the Power from whom all the strength of all existing things is derived. If then man complains of his weakness, it behoves him to consider, that his safety, while in this state of existence, is mainly owing to this very weakness; since every one of all who surround him, of all who have preceded him, of all who will follow him, is, has been, or will be, as much circumscribed in his power of evil, as he is, who so bitterly complains of the apparent injustice and hardship at finding himself so constantly checked by obstacles in his undertakings. And unless human nature were

changed, that is to say, unless every individual of the human family could be induced by internal impulse to do that only which is good in the eyes of God and man, or in other words, unless man would cease to be man: it would in effect be abandoning the weaker and more unsuspecting to the caprice and tyranny of the fierce and designing, if the Almighty were to give to man a greater power over his own destinies than he now possesses. Who then will not discover, in this very circumstance, as well as in every other of our organization, that all we know of is ordained in a manner which no foresight nor experience of ours could improve?

“But why,” asks some one, “do we so often see the pious abandoned for a time to the evil designs of the wicked, before he is overtaken by divine vengeance? Why triumphs so often the ungodly, and for so long a period, over the righteous sufferer?” To these seemingly startling questions of the doubter, so often asked with the melancholy shake of distrust in divine Providence, we can easily find answers, if we only dive a little beneath the surface of things, and endeavour to trace the reasons for God’s rule on earth, without rashly presuming to discover his impenetrable counsels. Let us examine the conduct of even the best man, or of the best set of men that ever existed, and we shall find that some fault was yet theirs, that in some cases they proved themselves flesh and blood; for with reverence to the illustrious dead we must confess, that Abraham, Jacob and Moses, in some few instances, departed from the rule which they themselves acknowledged as the only road to salvation for them. This in nowise derogates the least from the proud pre-eminence, by which they stand so much above the rest of mankind, for it was consonant with their nature, that they who had not yet laid aside the tenements of clay in which their pure souls were bound up, should sometimes, though seldom, or perhaps once only in their life, pay the forfeit of their not being, according to their nature, free from a temptation to sin.

Again; since man is constituted a free agent by divine sufferance, and since no force is laid on any of his inclinations, save it be through the warning voice of revelation, and by paternal chastisement: it is unavoidable that wicked men



should at times arise, aye; even those, whom we, from their great dissimilarity to ourselves style a disgrace to human nature. Then again we must discover, that the very superiority of the good over the bad makes the former obnoxious to the latter. Now it is this antipathy which is often made by God the instrument to act as a punishment to those who fear Him, when they give way to their inclinations, and stray in some degree from the path of their duty.—Here then we have the solution to the fearful inquiries of the wavering. The righteous has sinned, and immediately the wicked has the power conferred to harm him for a season; and as long as the latter keeps within bounds, and heaps no more evil upon the other than he ought to bear for his sins, we cannot arraign divine justice for suffering the temporary triumph; but as soon as the sufferings of the good exceed their just measure, we have thousands of examples to prove that divine assistance is not withheld, that divine vengeance is not stayed, the moment the intention of the wicked becomes manifest, “to swallow (to use the language of Holy Writ) him who is more righteous than he.” And if we ask for a striking illustration, we can find one in the occasion of the festival of *Purim*, which we are to celebrate at this very season. The history of the book of Esther is, no doubt, familiar to you all; and we shall therefore notice only the principal features thereof, for the sake, merely, of pointing out the connection of the circumstances narrated there, and to apply it to prove the correctness of our assertion, that the righteous, though suffering, will not be entirely abandoned to the machination of the godless. The precise period of the history under consideration is not correctly ascertained; but in all probability, or at least as some suppose,\* it was after the building of the second temple, that a king of Persia, whose dominions extended from the Ganges to the sources of the Nile, gave a great entertainment to the inhabitants of his capital, Susa; during the progress of the feast, as he was con-

\* The Ahasveros mentioned in the Bible, must have been subsequent to Cambyses, who was the conqueror of Egypt; for it is said: “Ahasveros who reigned from *Hodu* to *Cush*.” Does this not mean from India to Ethiopia? May it not have been the eccentric and tyrannical Xerxes, of whose strange exploits Grecian history is so full?

siderably elated with wine, he ordered that his wife should appear before the whole assembled multitude, that all might be delighted with her beauty. The proud queen refused to obey the ridiculous command of her imperious lord, who, highly incensed, consulted the chiefs of the empire concerning the punishment to be inflicted on her. Vashti was accordingly removed from the royal dignity, to satisfy the king's resentment; but he soon repented of the rash act, and to compensate himself for the loss of her, every female of note was gathered unto Susa to be submitted to his approval, and at length he found the Jewess Esther the most pleasing in his eyes, and she was declared queen instead of Vashti. The history of the exalted orphan presents some features for profound meditation; and we cannot refuse our admiration to one (no matter what her faults might have been) who gratefully recollected the kindness of her cousin Mordecai, by whom she had been educated after the death of her parents, although now raised to the highest honours which could be conferred on her; as we read: "And the command of Mordecai, Esther did, just as when she was under his charge." Mordecai soon after this time had an opportunity of being serviceable to the king, by being instrumental in discovering the conspiracy of two chamberlains against the life of their master; for the present, no reward was given to the unpretending Israelite, who in likelihood was satisfied with having done no more than his duty in protecting the government under which he lived; but this act of fidelity was entered upon the records of the empire, and it was destined to become the cause of salvation to Mordecai and the whole remnant of Israel. It was not long after this last event, that the king raised one Haman, surnamed the Agagite, to the office of chief minister of the empire: and commanded every one of his servants to pay due homage to the favourite by falling down in the dust before him. Mordecai, however, refused to pay the servile tribute, and having been noticed by the haughty Haman, he was denounced as a Jew, and as one rebellious to the commands of the king. Haman, to avenge his insulted dignity, did not think it sufficient to remove the hated Jew alone, but also the whole Jewish people, amongst whom Mordecai was, probably, a chief of high standing

But not having the power to do any act of violence without the king's consent, he endeavoured to obtain this by flattering his cupidity and inflaming his resentment. Yet before he ventured on this step, he threw lots, to discover, by diving into futurity, which day would be the most propitious for the execution of his plans. The choice fell upon the thirteenth of the twelfth month; and having thus discovered, as he vainly imagined, the most fatal day for the Jewish people, he fancied that he was guarded from all disappointment in the execution of his project; since, as he thought, he had ascertained to a surety the will of fate, according to the superstitious notions of the heathens; not believing that He, who thrones alone in heaven, directs all things, as is best consonant with his wisdom. Haman having easily obtained the concurrence of the king, and promulgated a decree in the name of the sovereign, that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month all Jews in all the provinces of the empire should be slain and their property confiscated for the use of the state, or in other words for the benefit of Haman, to whom the king had granted the right of proceeding with the Jews according to his pleasure. Already were the enemies of Israel rejoiced, already were the swords unsheathed, and with joyous anticipation our adversaries looked anxiously for the coming of the fatal day. But in vain was their early joy, for it had been otherwise ordained by the Father of his people, and the most unexpected help rescued them from the imminent destruction. Esther had hitherto never revealed her origin or her people; she lived securely in the king's palace, unconscious of the danger which threatened the whole race of Jacob. Suddenly the news were brought to her, that her beloved kinsman was at the palace-gate in the habiliments of mourning. She sent to inquire the cause, when the dreadful decree was transmitted to her by Mordecai, who exhorted her to go to the king and supplicate him for the salvation of her people. But the arbitrary laws of the Persian empire made it a capital offence for any one to approach the king's presence without having been summoned; and it had happened that the queen herself had not been called for the space of thirty days. She therefore sent in reply to Mordecai, a representation of the great personal risk she would incur by the hazardous step which

he recommended. But Mordecai, feeling a perfect confidence in God, could not tolerate this expression of fear, even in a woman; he answered therefore in these memorable words: "Imagine not in thy mind to escape in the king's palace alone of all the Jews. For if thou remainest silent at this time, enlargement and help may arise to the Jews from elsewhere, and thyself and thy father's house may perish; and who knows, but that thou hast reached the royal dignity for this emergency?" The queen needed no further admonition; for the spark of enthusiastic confidence in God had been kindled, and she ordered Mordecai to proclaim a fast for all the Jews in Susa, in order that they might merit the favour of God by humiliating themselves before Him, whom they had always found a sure support in the hour of trouble. The third day of the fast had already commenced, but Esther had not yet been called; still summoning all the fortitude which a righteous cause must inspire, she clothed herself in royal garments, and boldly advanced to the inner court of the palace, where the king was seated on his throne. The rising resentment at her boldness was soon changed into kindlier feelings, and he held out to her the sceptre which he bore in his hand, thus showing her, by the customary sign of grace, that her offence had been pardoned. Calculating correctly, that Esther would hardly have risked her life, unless she had a weighty request to prefer, he offered her half his kingdom, if she wished it; but all she asked was, that the king and Haman should partake of a repast in her own apartments. The king and Haman did as she had desired; again Ahasveros repeated his magnificent offer, and again she merely asked for a repetition of the favour granted her for the coming day. I need not relate to you the eventful occurrences of the following night and morning; for you all doubtlessly know how Haman found himself already humbled before the man he so much hated, when he was again summoned to attend the queen. Esther now delayed no longer to reveal to the king her people, and in the most pathetic manner, she begged for her own life and the salvation of her kindred race. The king evidently incensed at the daring unknown, who had meditated the death of his wife, demanded the name of the wretch, and imagine his surprise when answered: "This wicked Ha-

man!" His fate was now sealed, and from the banquet he was led to the gibbet, where he expiated with his life for the evil intended against the innocent. The decree against the Jews was repealed; and the thirteenth of Adar, on which their enemies had hoped to extirpate them, was by the royal authority appointed as a day on which they might freely exercise vengeance on those who had meditated their downfall. We may perhaps regret, that the Israelites of those days took so bloody a revenge, but we should reflect into what misery these enemies had intended to plunge them; how fierce their delight had been at the anticipated slaughter; and that moreover the entire remnant of the people of God had been threatened with utter annihilation by those very men who afterwards fell beneath the sword of their intended victims. In this manner was Israel saved from the evil designs of Haman; and the festival of Purim was instituted to celebrate annually the wonderful event, and to return at the recurrence of this season our thanks to our Deliverer, who always came to our assistance, when man rose up against us. But does not the fate of Haman teach us how watchful is the superintendence of God over the affairs of man—and how inefficient are all the cunningly devised plans of the proud and wicked to injure those who are too weak to protect themselves from the impending danger? Little did Haman think, that, when he alone was invited to the queen's table, he went to his death; little did he imagine that the sons, of whom he boasted, would perish so soon after him; little did he believe, that Mordecai, for whom he had erected a scaffold, would become the first officer of the king; and yet all this did come to pass, and all Haman's art for evil was rendered as nought, at the moment of his greatest seeming security. Truly may we say, that "the lot is thrown by man, but that to God alone belongs the decision." If then, oppressed one, thou art suffering under severe affliction, if thou seest thy best plans fail of their intended effect: let thy confidence nevertheless remain unshaken in the God by whose favour and will thou wert sent hither, to earn for thyself on earth an immortal happiness. If thou seest the wicked flourish for a while, if thou beholdest their power extending wider and wider: fear thou not, for they, as well as thou, have a limit set to their ambition, and like the waves of

the ocean which are broken by the sand against which they dash so furiously, the strength of the unrighteous is exhausted by the humble resistance which the moral force of the mind of the lowly good opposes to the fierce onset; for this is the immovable and wise decree of God. Cease therefore thy complaining, son of the earth, and be assured, that if thy power be broken, if thy strength be gone, the powerful arm held out over thee for thy protection is one that is never wearied, that the Providence that watches over thee is never tired. And if we as Israelites ask, why are we left in servitude, at so hopeless a distance from our own inheritance; why do the nations triumph over the chosen people; why have the shearers so often despoiled the lonely sheep? we must reply, because this long captivity, this seemingly hopeless suffering will and must teach us to place that confidence in God, as our sole Protector and Saviour, which we failed to do when we were in our own land; for we have since our dispersion been taught that our Father yet lives, although we have been banished from his favourite abode. We cannot despair of a coming redemption, if we will but reflect from how many dangers we have escaped; how often the net was rent asunder which was spread to ensnare our unsteady feet. And therefore, brethren, our hope must be strong, our faith must be unshaken, if the temporary evils be ever so great; for we have the promise of God, of Him who never wavers, that a mother may sooner cast off the child of her own body, than that He would forsake the nation which He once chose as his peculiar treasure before the eyes of all the world!

O God, Thou who lookest down from thy unbounded realms of greatness upon the humble and the lowly, that walk before Thee in meekness: have compassion once more, in thy grace, upon the smallest of nations, and display again to them thy miraculous power, as in those days when Thou ledst them forth from the land of Egypt, to follow thy guidance into the wilderness, where Thou didst give them thy law through Moses thy servant! Amen.

Adar 10th. }  
February 23d. } 5591.

NOTE.—Against the several historical sketches scattered through my discourses it may perhaps be alleged, that it was useless to tell the people what

they can find better told in the Bible. In answer to this I would merely observe, that these discourses are intended for the young as well as the old, for the ignorant no less than the well informed; and I thought that by presenting the chief points connected with the fasts, festivals and other subjects, I might perhaps succeed in imparting some useful information, which, though obvious, might otherwise not be accessible to all. At all events this view satisfied me, and I trust that the candid reader will not condemn, though he may not approve, my course.

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#### DISCOURSE XIV.

##### REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.

O ALMIGHTY PROTECTOR, whose eye surveyeth all, whose foresight careth for all, whose power reigneth over all, shield, protect, and save us from all evil, and ward off from us all affliction! Amen.

##### BRETHREN!

In whatever we undertake of worldly matters, our object will be to obtain some position good, or to ward off some definite evil; for no matter how much this reason may be concealed by others, which we perhaps ourselves may imagine to be the real causes: still the desire for some absolute advantage is, I may freely say always, the chief motive which prompts our action. Thus we see the merchant crossing the stormy ocean for the sake of augmenting his wealth; the philosopher pursuing his studies, to perfect his discoveries; the warrior braving all peril in search of glory:—and on the other hand we see a man submitting himself to the knife of the surgeon to be cured of a disease; and the weak overstraining his exhausted strength to escape from impending danger. It is in truth, the principle of self-love, implanted in us for the wisest of

purposes, which is ever active to impel us to reach whatever is agreeable to our mind; and if it is exercised under proper limitations, it must be the means of making us as good and useful as we were intended to be by the Almighty, and we shall be such men as will be benefactors and guides to our species.—Self-love is in this respect then essentially different from selfishness; since the first looks towards gratifying the mind as well as the body, the latter only towards yielding to the brutal desires and feelings inherent to man. If, therefore, we find a man always striving to gratify himself only, even at the expense of the rights and feelings of others: we may freely pronounce him one with whom the candid and upright will avoid all intercourse and connexion, since self is to him the greatest and dearest object in the world. But if a man respects the same rights in others, which he wishes to enjoy for himself, if he looks around to gratify the finer feelings of humanity, which proceed from a tender sensibility and a sympathy for the wants and sufferings of others: we then say, that he is one, that loves his species, and the refined love he bears to himself, impels him to make others around him happy,\* at the expense even of personal inconvenience. According to this exposition, a selfish man can never be good, since he only lives for himself: and a man of sensibility only can act up to the duties required of him, inasmuch as he loves those also, who like him, were created after God's own image; and because he looks upon himself, as a member of the human family at large, and subject to the same regulations, which the Creator thought fit to promulgate for the benefit of all, and the safety of every individual. The indulgence of the passions, the rioting in debaucheries, the imbruing of hands in human blood, are the characteristics of the former; active benevolence, however, humility and piety those

\* Having lent out the MSS., I find the following lines endorsed on the margin, in the handwriting of an esteemed female friend, whose name I would gladly mention, were I permitted to do so. I really feel gratified that the sentiments expressed above should have, so long ago, struck so great a mind as Pope's.

“ Thus God and nature link'd the gen'ral frame,  
And bade self-love and social be the same.”

*Pope's Essay on Man.*



of the latter; the one degrades humanity to the level of the brute; the other proves, that in all, save mortality, he is but a little less than angels.—Yet, as our ideas are from the moment of our birth continually and irresistibly drawn to the gratification of our bodily wants: it is very natural, nay, unavoidable, that we should strive to obtain the positive worldly good and to avoid absolute bodily evil. Thus, we should unhesitatingly call any one a madman, who would try to persuade us, that it would be conducive to our comfort, to remain the whole day immersed up to the chin in water, or that the flesh of carrion could furnish us with delicious food; for our experience, our taste, or our feeling, would demonstrate the fallacy of such notions, and the aberration from our usually entertained opinions of the physical reformer would strike as an evidence of his being of unsound mind. In this way we are taught by taste and experience to satisfy the cravings of nature, in a manner the most agreeable to our disposition and organization. The food, therefore, which every human being is obliged to take to preserve his existence, is various according to the tastes and habits of various individuals or even nations. The garments, too, with which we cover ourselves must, to a greater or less degree, be adapted to the season and climate; and the pursuits of man must also be regulated, as far as physical strength is concerned, according to his ability of enduring fatigues and deprivations. Likewise, feeling and experience will soon teach, that to plunge a finger into the fire will cause pain; and, undoubtedly, if a savage should accidentally have scalded himself from an utter ignorance of the effects of boiling water upon the skin, he will be more circumspect with its use for the future, since experience has now taught him to dread the unpleasant and painful result. It is needless to exemplify so obvious a proposition at greater length, and it was only touched upon to show in the sequel its application to moral actions.—To proceed: whatever pursuits we engage in, we must have an especial and specific object in view, though even to ourselves this object may not be so defined, as to enable us to explain our sensation to others.—If we enter into mercantile speculations, our object is, to a certainty, gain in the first instance, be this for our own benefit or that of others.—The man of learn-

ing would, in all probability, forsake his studies, if he were convinced, that the end of all his endeavours would be an ignominious death, after a life spent in the most dreadful privations, and that his name should be buried in total oblivion.—The soldier would certainly never strive to signalize himself, if he had not some hopes that his name would be honourably mentioned in the records of history. The evident objects which these and many others have in view are self-aggrandizement and notoriety; and even if these are not the sole springs of action, they are, nevertheless, the primary causes to a certain extent at least. Now, where the effect is apparent and immediate, and the enjoyment of the desired end in a measure certain: the energies of our nature will be strongly urged to forward the accomplishment by all means possible to us; and some of you have probably experienced, how, after making great exertions for the attainment of any object, you became the more energetic the more you approached the wished-for consummation. It seems, that the almost expiring power receives a new access, as the end comes into view, and this enables us to overcome difficulties once considered as insurmountable.—And since the advantages of riches are apparent, and the beneficial results of fame and standing obvious to all: we see every mortal endeavouring his utmost to equal those who are at ease and honoured around him, and no exertion is considered too great, which will place a man at the height of human power. Nay, crimes are pardoned to a successful sinner; and what in a humble transgressor is called treason or murder, is styled patriotism and heroic greatness, if success has crowned the efforts of the wily demagogue. We, therefore, need not manifest any astonishment, that riches are eagerly sought or honours ardently coveted, if it were that life was given merely to enable us to become rich and great. But if this were the sole object of God in creating man, how unequally would his favours then be distributed! how many would then be wronged out of their rightful portion, unless we could imagine, that the world was made for the sole purpose of enabling a handful to become possessed of great wealth, and a few others to share amongst themselves all the honours and power incident to man. This idea—that all was made for them—may well suit the proud and arro-

gant, those who rely on their own strength, who seem to build their habitations amidst the stars; but never would it be consonant with divine goodness, never could this have been the intention of the God, kind to all, before whom the greatest of the earth are but as dust, and before whom, praised be his name for evermore! the poor and the rich, the weak and the strong, the foolish as much as the wisest, are alike! No—never for such purposes—to gain riches and acquire greatness was life dispensed to so many millions of intelligent creatures; but for the end of leading them on to greater happiness, to the permanent and unfading bliss, which was for ever destined to be the reward of virtue. Here is a theme to dwell on with delight, this is an idea from which we never can turn away but with an entire and heartfelt satisfaction; for the knowledge of its truth fully demonstrates that, in what is really essential, all men have been truly created equal; since to be virtuous according to our means, and to be blessed if we have done all we could accomplish, are objects within the reach of every one that ever was sent on earth; and thus actually we may maintain, that a perfect equality of gifts has been conferred, although in outward circumstances and in the distribution of outward blessings there appears an inequality, which however, was so ordained for a wise and beneficial purpose. And yet we see, that the power and glory of outward and mortal life are so inordinately coveted; and why? solely because they are more apparent than spiritual advantages, and to a great degree actually necessary for our preservation; and these causes induce a man to persevere in their acquisition, even after all reasonable wants have been abundantly satisfied, and to disregard the benefits which the pursuit of religion will confer on his undying soul. No moralist—it may be conceded—if he is a real friend to his species, will ever inculcate, that a man should not seek the means of an honest competency; no one, who lays a just value upon the true glory of an honourable and revered name, can, consistently with religion, teach, that it would be safe to disregard public opinion, and to make oneself ridiculous by eccentricity or an overbearing contempt of, and supercilious demeanour towards, others; no, religion asks not self-denial of this kind, for all the books of Scripture praise highly the pos-

session of a good name, and recommend industry and perseverance ; nay more, wealth and fame are considered and held up to view as blessings to be desired, but always to be sought under the limitations of God's holy, everlasting, and unchangeable law. Thus it is certainly true, that the benefits arising from the observance of the Sabbath and festivals are not so apparent as the loss resulting therefrom, if we view the subject only in a pecuniary light. But admitting this to its fullest extent, does it not strike you nevertheless, that the infringement of the law has its source in base and mean selfishness? for what noble feeling is gratified by Sabbath-breaking? Does it promote the welfare of the community? Is the mind of the individual himself improved by seeking gain instead of the favour of God? Admit again, that money spent in charity and the maintainance of religious establishments—when, as given among us, owing to the small number of our people, ambitious views and thirst for distinction cannot be gratified thereby—admit I say, that money thus spent is to all intents and purposes a diminution of our wealth by as much as is given: still, is this enough to prevent a man from exercising the most amiable feelings of human nature? Is the loss of a little money sufficient to excuse him from dispensing blessings around him to those who need his assistance? Should this induce him to refuse contributing his portion towards the endowment of places of public worship and general instruction? Yet there are, unfortunately, many of ample means who contribute little or nothing to promote the religion of their ancestors, who suffer the indigent to beg in vain, intent only on increasing their heaps of gold, and augmenting their importance and power; and still they claim the name of being good, and arrogate to themselves the distinction of being kindly disposed to the community; and there are not wanting those who will, fawning upon the rich, concede virtues to them, which they could never discover in the poor. But who can in justice call that man good, who closes his eyes to the distress of the needy? who can praise the public spirit and piety of him, who suffers the house of God to fall into ruins, sees with composure the poor remaining uninstructed, when his mite freely given might perchance resuscitate the falling cause, by inducing others to follow his example

of liberality? Every sensible person will condemn so mean and grovelling a spirit, who is guilty of minding his own personal interest and convenience regardless of the general good; and if he expresses in words ever so much interest for the wants of his fellow-man, no one will value them in the least whilst his deeds do not correspond with his professions. In short, we willingly acknowledge that religious duties are seldom of that nature, that wealth and personal ease are promoted by them; neither charity nor the observance of the festivals brings any gain, which we can count; to visit the sick, to attend at the couch of suffering, and to watch with the dead, are tasks upon our convenience; but, setting all considerations of a disinterested practice of duty out of sight, who knows but that our being rich and at ease may depend solely and exclusively upon our attention to these duties? We all have felt, that no man is safe in his possessions; that the greatest wealth can be dissipated, and the most powerful one may be humbled; and as thus we know not how long and by what tenure we may be permitted to hold our property from God, would it not be wise and prudent to obey Him, carefully and implicitly, even if nothing but worldly interest were to instruct us? Now grant then, that wealth and honours are the greatest gifts which the Almighty can bestow on mortals, it becomes evidently the more necessary for those that are timid and unconfiding to be the more strictly on their guard with reference to obedience to the will of God, so that they may be always held deserving of being left in possession of their acquired or inherited riches and power. But who is bold enough to say, that there is nothing more costly in this world, than the most successful fruits of avarice and ambition? who will assert that the greatest miser and the greatest despot are the happiest of men? And yet, unless the persons who possess wealth and power in their greatest extent were the happiest, wealth and power cannot confer the utmost happiness to which we can attain in this life of probation. "What then is the greatest good?" To this we answer, piety towards God and love towards our fellow-beings: these are blessings which the humblest can enjoy to as great a degree as the most powerful, of which the foolish can partake, though of necessity in a somewhat more limited sphere, as well

as the wisest. And enter once the humble dwelling of the lowly pious, and though wealth may be absent, though no splendour surrounds him, though the toil by which he lives must be daily renewed, though his name is unknown beyond his own neighbourhood: be assured, nevertheless, that he bears that within him, which is to be prized beyond all wealth, beyond all glitter valuable. Watch him as he steps over his threshold after a day of labour, behold his good housewife approaching him with their infant on her arm, see another child clinging around his knee in childish ecstasy; and now observe his eye turned upwards with tearful but glad adoration to Heaven for the truly happy lot which is his by the blessing of the Supreme: and then say, what, compared to such a state, is all the pomp of wealth and power, where envy and hatred often assume the mask of love and friendship, to beguile the miserable remnant of mortality of his anger, that he may not bestow on others the estate, which they, his heirs, expect to come in possession of at his decease.—Now grant, therefore, for argument's sake, that the pleasures and blessings of wealth and power are visible and tangible to a much greater degree than those of piety: it behoves us, nevertheless, to throw in the opposite scale the anxiety and vexation incident to worldly greatness, and that to piety there are joined blessings and pleasures which the former can never impart.—Thus much may be said, even without adverting to the outwardly unseen and unfelt promises, which Scriptures record to the advantage of the good; since if life were even to terminate with our death, there is yet sufficient reason for preferring piety and the observance of religious duties to any other pursuit, because of the satisfaction and the sublime tranquillity of the mind which accompany them. But there are happier, higher, and more enduring fruits of goodness, which sooner or later will become the portion of the worshippers of God—and let others triumph in their wickedness, let the good soever bow before the powerful sinner—there is a period, and come it will, when the film will be drawn from the sight of the wilfully blind, when their infatuation will vanish, but when, alas! it will be too late to remedy the evil which has been once and irretrievably committed!—Yes brethren, it was even in the time of the prophets, that there lived many who

pointed to the prosperity of the sinners, as an evidence, that man might tempt God, and yet escape unscathed, and that consequently it would appear, that a person would do well to hold with a firm grasp what he once possesses, and that it were unwise to spend any thing in charity and other religious purposes. To rebut these objections of cupidity and weakness of faith in the justice of God, Malachi, the last of those illustrious men, by whose mouth the Lord thought proper to instruct the world, spoke as follows :

“Your words have been strong against me, sayeth the Lord, and you said, what have we been speaking against thee? You said, it is needless to serve God, and what did we gain, when we observed his statutes, and walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the presumptuous happy; yes, even they that practise wickedness are prosperous, yes they have even tempted the Lord and have escaped. Then they that feared the Lord spoke to one another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and it was written before Him in the book of remembrance, for those who fear the Lord and reverence his name.” Malachi iii.

And then continues the prophet :

והיו לי אמר ה' צבאות ליום אשר אני עשה סגלה  
 וחמלתי עליהם כאשר יחמל איש על בנו העבד אתו :  
 ושבתם וראיתם בין צדיק לרשע בין עבד אלהים לאשר  
 לא עבדו : מלאכי ג' יז :

“And they shall be mine, on that day, which I have set apart for judgment, says the Lord of hosts, and I will spare them as a man spares his son that serves him. And you shall return, and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him who has not served him.” Ibid. 17-18.

Here are the objections of the timid stated; they see not the use of serving God; no private interest is served by religion, no notoriety is gained by humility; they point with trembling apprehension to the proud wealthy sinners, who, so to say, brave the anger of the Lord with impunity; they next imagine that wickedness will not meet with disfavour, they hesitate and ask, if it were true that punishment is the consequence of sin, why does it not follow instantaneously and on all

occasions. But they observe not, they regard not, that, if punishment were at all times to ensue immediately, a true and disinterested reverence of God and confidence in his providence and justice could not possibly take root in the human breast. Consider, brethren, that, if for instance a violation of the Sabbath should be followed by the instantaneous death of the transgressor, it would not be the least meritorious in us to abstain from infringing the law, seeing that we should be destroyed if we disobeyed; and consequently, not obedience to God, but interest, worldly and palpable interest, the fear of bodily harm, would deter us. Suppose, too, that reward should always be the fruit of piety in some tangible shape or other: to be pious, then, would only be to hold out an inducement to God to pay us for our work, just as the day-labourer expects to obtain his pay from his master when his allotted task is done. Piety would thus be reduced to a mere barter on the one hand, and a remedy on the other. But this never was, never could have been the intention of God in making man a free agent, by which he was designed to choose from conviction and inclination, not to be bribed and frightened. And though to serve God from motives of fear and even of interest be a virtue too, yet the greatest moral perfection attainable is to serve Him from pure feelings of adoration, to be impelled solely by an admiration of his greatness, wisdom, and beneficence, which are so abundantly displayed in all his works, since from yon splendid orb, that serves us as a light by day, down to the moats that dance in his rays, and the minute insect unobservable by the naked eye, all is one chain of beauty, order, and perfection. This is true piety, true adoration of God, here no meanness mixes itself with our holier sensations; here no avarice chokes up the fountain of sincere benevolence; here no ambition for worldly greatness crowds out the noble offsprings of religious obedience; for then, even whilst not unmindful of our preservation, whilst labouring in the sphere assigned us by an All-wise Providence, we shall be willing to love God above all, and our neighbour like ourselves. In fine, unless you convince yourselves, that nothing but ultimate injury can result from purely worldly pursuits, that at the best no splendour here enjoyed can in the least avail you, that no earthly greatness can atone for duties



neglected, for misdeeds committed, and time misspent: you must remain on the lowest degree of excellence, for you lack that which is the truly valuable, the only thing by which you can demonstrate, that your life has not passed away like the vision of a night, of which nothing is recollected when the eyelids are freed from the bonds of slumber.—And, disguise it as you will, imagine a thousand necessities, urge innumerable excuses, nothing holy will be found at the root of your worldly pursuits; for self-aggrandizement alone prompts you to these exertions; since you desire wealth in order to become rich; you seek wisdom to appear wise before the world, and if you look for advancement, it is that your power may be felt. In all this there is nothing, either in the motive or the result, which can plead for you on the day of trial, for in none of your doings of this nature can the glory of God, the well-being of mankind, and your own immortal happiness be the end in view. But if you submit cheerfully, not patiently merely, to the will of God, if you advance step by step to the perfection, which the adorers of the Lord enjoy: you need not tremble for the coming day, for you will then be treasured up as the “son who serves his father.” And will not a state of endless bliss be compensation sufficient for all your exertions? and will not the coming felicity—future it is true, but still certain—be reward enough for all the little good you can accomplish?—Or is it delayed too long for your impatience? but consider how short at best is your time on earth, how very rapidly those days will flit by, which the rich, the honoured, and the powerful will be permitted to tarry here. And how can you complain of the unreasonableness of suffering you to wait so long, when you ought to reflect, how very confined your ideas are of eternity! Perhaps you fear, that the promised reward may never come? Then know, that God it is, who promised it through the mouth of his faithful servants, and that none of his words ever falls to the ground without fulfilling its object! And you can doubt Him? Israelites! are you those so little of faith? Have not his promises always been accomplished? And who more than your nation has experienced this so often and so remarkably? Reflect that your people owes its origin to the promise made to Abram, your ancestor, at “the covenant be-

tween the pieces," and consider that just as the limited time had expired, your ancestors were redeemed by a mighty hand from oppression and thralldom.—The Israclites were groaning under oppression, the sacred Record says, and God heard their cries from amidst their labour, and He remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob ; Moses was sent as God's messenger to Pharoah, to claim the dismissal of the oppressed Hebrews from the mighty king of Egypt, who insolently declared, that he knew not the Eternal, and would not suffer Israel to go ;—but he was at length glad to let our people go unto freedom, when his pride had been humbled, and when he had felt, that it is in vain to oppose the counsels of the Most High, and that no station will shield a man against the arrows of his punishment. This is the history of our people, as the book of Exodus tells it, and it has been verified and proved by the researches of the wise and curious ; but it needs no other evidence than Holy Writ to convince Jews of the truth of sacred history ; I speak to believers, and further demonstration is therefore useless.—Here then is evidence that the word of God is immutable, unchangeable, and its effect certain ; we can accordingly not doubt the promises of Him, who has never deceived, though their fulfilment has as yet not been accomplished, though their effect is hidden from our sight, and their working is beyond our comprehension. And notwithstanding the weakness of our reason, we are not left in uncertainty concerning the different issues of vice and virtue, for God himself has informed us of them ; and if the punishment of sin and the reward of piety should even not be displayed in this state of limited existence : we may rest assured that both will be proved to a certainty on that awful day of judgment, when it will be seen by all what difference there is between the righteous and the wicked, and when God will show how miserable he must be rendered, who has remained a stranger to his worship, and how happy he is who has truly served Him with all his soul and all his heart, and who swerved not from his duty, although oppressed by worldly ills, which were sent as a means of purifying him from his sins and transgressions.

O Lord, whose power is every where, whose word is unchangeable, restore thy people to their boundaries ; and may,

according to thy promise, the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem be again agreeable to Thee as in days of yore and years of former times. May this soon come to pass, nay speedily and in our days, through thy anointed, the son of David ! Amen.

Nissan 9th. }  
 March 23rd. } 5591.

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## DISCOURSE XV.

### THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD.

THOU, who only desirest the well-being of thy creatures, and findest delight in their obedience to thy will only in as much as it tends to promote their own happiness : bless us with wisdom and knowledge, that we may understand the ways of thy holy law, and follow them in truth and sincerity ! Amen.

#### BRETHREN !

If on all occasions we could but know the true effect of any deed we contemplate doing ; if our foreknowledge of futurity were sufficient to teach us to a certainty the event before we commence working : it would be quite unnecessary to lay down rules and directions for our government, for even the smallest child then would always choose the most beneficial, provided its intellect were not disordered.—But how does the case stand now, in the manner human knowledge is organized ? who knows to-day what is to happen on the morrow ? True it is, that men of learning can tell before-hand, when certain appearances in the heavens will take place,—yes, they know to a certainty almost the minute on which the lights of heaven will be darkened ; but this is only knowing by observation, how the Creator has organized his handiwork—nature ; this is but

confessing, in other words, the omnipotent power of the Ruler of all, whose works are perfect, and respond ever to the intended effect. But of the ultimate result of our own actions, of the final issue of the deeds wrought in our present existence, even the wisest of us is ignorant. It was the will of God, that man's reason should not reach beyond a certain extent, that human research should be bounded by the limits of reality—the past and the present; though even in this space his mind often wanders in racking uncertainty and perplexing doubt, for want of knowledge of details; but into futurity—no man can dive of his own free will, nay, he cannot in the least degree lift the veil which hides the surface of coming things; and thus he is left to rely upon the Author of his being for the issue of his endeavours, and willing or unwilling he is unable to place himself one step beyond the reach of this Infinite Being, and in his omnipresent care he must repose his trust, yea, though he impiously dare to question the existence of God! Well may we say, that in God alone we act and exist, for without his sufferance nothing could remain in being even for one moment; as we are taught in the sublime words of the Psalmist: "Thou turnest but thy face, they are affrighted; Thou takest away their spirit, they perish, and to their dust they return." (Psalm civ. 29.) And being thus short lived, short sighted mortals, subject perpetually to be compelled to resign our spirit into the hands of the Giver thereof: we ought to rely for protection where alone it can be found, and seek for knowledge at the Fountain of unending wisdom.

If now a man should ask: "Why has God left us so powerless, and has hidden from us so entirely all knowledge of futurity?" we answer, that this was wisely ordained, in order that no one should rely upon his own wisdom, and trust to his own strength; but that discovering his weakness and insufficiency he might learn to pay due deference to his Creator, and subject to his service the entire energy of his mind and body. And as, at the same time, we are ignorant of the actual effects our conduct, when based upon our own reasoning, will have: it follows as a matter of necessity, that it is our duty to ascertain, if possible, what line of action will be beneficial to ourselves and others, and what will be injurious in its tendency.

It must be apparent, upon slight reflection, that if we follow our own inclinations, or in other words, if we surrender ourselves to the guidance of the passions, we must often do that, the effects of which will be injurious; since if it were otherwise, every act of man would be beneficial in its tendency. For, if we were permitted to do whatever suits our fancy, it would be requisite, in order to constitute our conduct purely good, that nothing but good should result therefrom. But suppose it would suit our fancy to plunder our neighbour's house, to possess ourselves of his property; would this be right and beneficial? yet our neighbour says, he suffers wrong, from those whom he never injured; and consequently there can be no unmixed good, where, although the passions of the perpetrators are satisfied to their fullest extent, another one is undeservedly injured in his person or property.—Some one, however, may assert, that passion without the guidance of reason will be destructive, but that reason superadded will be enough to point out a proper course.—But here again we must come to the startling admission, that every human being has a share of reason assigned to him, and that, even admitting reason to be a safe guide, passion, inclination, and interest may raise such a tumult within us, as to drown all suggestions of reason, if no other check be admitted by us. It would thus appear, that since every person would have a right to claim for himself the liberty of acting according to the dictates of his own perception of right (all men being subject alike to be swayed by passion, inclination, and interest): no man's suggestions would be listened to, as to how far reason should hold the government; and, consequently, we should have as many different rules of conduct, as there are human beings; and this would, as shown, engender such a mass of evil,—whether passion be guided by reason or not,—that the majority of men would not be able to bear the wrong, the oppression, and the vexation, to which they would be subject from the powerful, the cunning, and the designing, who would always be on the watch to inflict every sort of burden which could promote their interest, and to which their passions, aided by greater means of harm, would undoubtedly prompt them; and in consequence, for the majority, thus oppressed and suffering, non-existence would be far

preferable to existence. Now, as such a state of things would evidently be a disorganization of the social compact, it might justly be argued, that the creation of every thing in so perfect and beautiful a manner had conferred no positive good; what then could be the object of all this harmony so universally observable around us in the entire structure of nature? why should all be at peace save man, the crown of the handiwork of the Lord? If we take this view of our own internal organization, if we in this way put a proper estimate on our efficiency and strength: we must be struck with the conviction, that our reason, though of far greater extent than the instinct of any other animal that inhabits the earth, still requires farther instruction and improvement, in order to constitute it in truth the greatest blessing; for it is only by a proper instruction in relation to what we are to do or not to do, that we can secure unto ourselves and others the greatest possible share of happiness, consistent with our short life on earth, and acting, as we must, with a body subject to pain, decay, and corruption. The instruction thus proved necessary, cannot, ought not, to proceed from a mortal prone to err, liable to be biassed, like ourselves; but from the One, who alone is always unchanged, whose thoughts are uninfluenced by interest or circumstance, and who need not, and does not, fear, in giving his opinion, aught that lives or exists in any part of creation: in other words, we should receive the law which God himself has promulgated for our government, seeing that by obeying it alone, and by causing it to be respected by others, we actually contribute the most we are capable of towards furthering the general welfare of mankind.—And in this ready listening to an instruction emanating from a higher Source of wisdom than ourselves, and in the cheerfulness displayed in correcting our vices, or what is the same, faults habitually committed by yielding to our earthly desires,—I assert, that in a conduct of this kind, proceeding from a sincere conviction of our own insignificance, consists the essence of all true religion. Is religion then, assuming this basis, an arbitrary rule invented by designing priests to impose a heavy yoke upon the unwilling shoulders of an ignorant multitude? is such a religion the effect of ignorance, of bigotry, and of superstition? Or rather, is not this reli-

gion the sacred guide granted by Providence, to point out to man the road to happiness? Yes, even the sensual one, and he who always regarded his personal convenience as the greatest good, and the scoffer, who ever ridiculed the idea of God's supervising in his greatness the little affairs of mortals: all must acknowledge, when serious reflection is once roused within them, when confusion seals their lips and forbids them to excuse their follies and the wrongs they have committed, that there is a treasure in the word of God, a life even in death, discoverable in the Revelation of the Lord, which they have wilfully neglected, and that they have reaped tares, instead of the wholesome fruit of life.—Yes, brethren, let us regard the goods of the earth as ever so valuable, necessity will one time or another force us to confess, that without a respect for religious enactments no true virtue can exist; and how can happiness be imagined, where virtue has not laid the foundation?—True, that virtue may not be always rewarded with outward bliss; but who can estimate the bliss within, the unfading serenity which accompanies the righteous, even unto death?—No further argument need be adduced to prove the necessity of the law promulgated by God, and the good effects resulting therefrom; since every reasonable being can easily discern the difference between acts arising from a feeling of devotion and confidence in the Lord—and those springing from motives of self-gratification merely, even assuming that such a principle could teach what is good and useful.

“But how is religion to be observed? what are the demands of revealed faith?” These questions, though frequently put in a manner as though they could not be easily solved, can be answered by a simple reference to the records of revelation, the holy Scriptures, for there are recorded the commandments which God instituted as the enactments of his will; and every man, therefore, is bound to do thereof, whatever may be in his power of effecting; and no excuse whatever, will justify him for neglecting any practicable duty, which he is certified to be the will of his Creator.—Although this deduction is so perfectly reasonable, permit me to present to you some few observations, in order to illustrate the subject a little more at length, since it is one which merits and ought to receive the

serious reflection of every Israelite.—In a former lecture on this subject, it has been shown, that unless a man is willing to make sacrifice of all personal considerations in the cause of piety, he cannot be said to be fired with true ardour for the holy cause. Now, as also partly said, these sacrifices to principle do not consist in an entire abstinence from all pleasures, and in a seclusion from social intercourse; for this never was the intention or scope of our law, which recommends sociality and pleasure, when enjoyed in moderation. But the sacrifices which we are bound to make to the will of God, consist simply in an entire disregard of all consequences, be they good or bad, that may possibly follow upon our doing those acts, which are prescribed by religion. From this definition you will clearly observe, that a mere profession, nay, even a sincere profession, of faith, is not all that is demanded, since principles, which prove themselves by words only, are mere outward show, in which there is nothing capable of conferring lasting benefits; but acts, the most trifling even, produce an impression somewhere, and by so much as they are worth, they always tend to augment the general mass of good.—Some one, however, may ask: “Why do we regard the ceremonial parts of religion with so much reverence, and what can be the good resulting from their careful observance?”—Questions of this nature are frequently asked, and even by persons pretending to piety; and in this way neglect of outward acts of worship is excused by many, if the offender holds but fast to the so-called moral laws.—In answer, we have to observe, that no Jew will contend, that honesty, integrity, and neighbourly kindness, are not virtues highly commendable, inculcated in the law, and for which the possessor deserves the blessing of Heaven; but then we also assert, that acts of worship, the ceremonies proper, are necessary, praiseworthy and useful in their tendency. For the following reasons: first, any act of worship proceeding from a pure motive, and obeyed because it is an emanation from the will of God, must produce, the oftener it is repeated, an acquiescence in the dictates of the Lord, and it is a habit of this kind that is at last the true essence of piety and devotion. Secondly, to do those acts, acknowledgedly great and useful, such as charity, justice, and preservation of human



life, is in a measure necessary to our nature, and we indulge in their exercise perhaps from motives of interest, since we may one day stand in need ourselves of the same deeds of kindness, which we now show to others. It will thus be evident, that in the execution of social virtues, as we will term the acts commonly called the moral law, the pure devotion towards God may have but little share in prompting them ; but in acts of worship, where we alone are the actors, and God the sole witness perhaps of our conduct, true worship can be most amply proved. For in no situation of this life can a heartfelt prayer be recompensed by the prayer of any other son of man, no matter how virtuous he may be ; patience under suffering and resignation to divine dispensations cannot be repaid by equal deeds in others ; and therefore we must contend, that in these and many other similar acts, the love of God, in its proper sense, is more pointedly exhibited than in any other way. It need not be repeated again in this place, that mere devotional, without social piety, is not to be considered as the sole demand of religion ; for we hold it as an essential principle of our faith, that the proper duties of man are not fulfilled, unless he observes the whole enactments of God, which are declared to be his will, and contained in intelligible terms in the books of Moses.—We will admit, that there are devotees who act, as though there were no human being toward whom any duties are to be fulfilled ; for their mind, is, as it were, wrapt up within themselves—in God they see only a watchful, jealous, Being, who commands them as their master, and requires of them, that all their time should be spent in devotional exercises. We will admit, I say, that there are such devotees, and also, that they are mistaken in their conceptions of God ; for He is a just, not an unmerciful, judge ; He, indeed, searches the heart, knows whether it is true in his service, but He wishes not that we should cease to be men, as soon as we enter on his worship ; not this is the economy which his wisdom has established, when He assigned labour to man during his sojourn on earth ; and they, therefore, who regard the Merciful One in the light of an arbitrary ruler, have quite misunderstood his will ; and consequently we should endeavour to prevent such erroneous ideas from taking root among us. But in

admitting this much against what may be termed the excesses of piety, we have admitted all that can reasonably be claimed as an objection to devotional, or rather the irregular and extravagant excesses, of devotional feelings. But there are many on the other hand, and unfortunately for the well-being of our religion, the number is so very great, who live as though there were no God! they perhaps do read the Bible of the Lord, but their eye is closed against whatever relates to his worship; they doubtlessly must be convinced, that regulations, the tendency of which has been to preserve a scattered people entire amidst all the toils, the fatigues, the dangers, the persecutions of a long captivity—a captivity prolonged to such a length that our hopes almost sicken, that our hearts nearly faint, were it not for the promises of God, so often repeated—must have been instituted by a Wisdom elevated far above our limited capacity, that laws so pure must at least be harmless in their operation: and yet they will ridicule the observance of these very wise, wholesome, priceless precepts, which we call the ordinances of the Lord; and they profess to look with as much contempt upon the pious believer, as if his system were fraught with evil to society. Do I state more than the fact which we are daily compelled to witness? And these scoffers are they, who wish to arrogate to themselves the title of philanthropists, like if the religious were enemies to mankind, and desirous of keeping the multitude groping in darkness; and even when finding that all subterfuges have failed, and when they are unable any longer to contend against the overwhelming force of conviction, that the books of Moses contain the undoubted revelation of the God of nature: they endeavour to excuse their unnatural unbelief by saying, that the statutes of the law were made for Israelites of a former period, but that they have ceased to be binding upon the present generation.—But is it possible, that any one laying claim to reason can be so blinded by ignorance and prejudice, as to maintain such gross absurdities? Where can the law of God be found, if the Pentateuch is no longer in force? Where will you seek for the guide of life, if you do not find it there? Perhaps you may say, that reason shall guide us, that from experience we will gather wisdom.—But where are those monuments of human reason, which have been as lasting as the

monuments of revelation? Where are the wise laws drawn from experience? Do we not rather find, that no human being can establish a single principle, which is not liable to be rescinded the following day? And from experience you will derive instruction! when it is evident, by the evidence of this very instructor you so much extol, that no man was ever prevented from following another upon the path of ruin, if no other opinions and principles save those derived from reason and experience prevented him? These facts, I believe to be so self-evident, and so well fortified by what we see every day, that it would be but fatiguing you, brethren, to say any more in refutation of such fallacious arguments.—But there is another point, involved in this mode of pushing the obligation of the word of God from our shoulders, to which I have to draw your attention. If the arguments we have before this adduced in favour of the necessity of a divine revelation be well founded in reason, and if we have succeeded in proving that the law of Moses, so called, is the record thereof: we must come to the conclusion, that the words and commandments contained in the Pentateuch are in truth the manifestation of the will of God, by which he intended to enlighten mankind with regard to their duties, which (in the words of the law itself) “they were to do and live through them;” and then, knowing, as we do, how wise and unwavering God is in all his doings, it is but reasonable to suppose that the enactments of his will, as manifested to Moses, are even to this hour considered by him in the same light of usefulness and necessity, as at the period when first He announced them.—For if we survey all that immense structure of nature, the creation, of which we form a part: we must discover, that in every particle, wisdom the most unsearchable, order the most unwavering, are manifested. The sun rises in the same manner now, as he did from the first moment of his installation as the light by day; planets upon planets move in their spheres with the utmost regularity without derangement or interruption; and descending to this humble, beautiful, earth of ours, we see spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter, change in a constant circle, with the utmost regularity and precision. Thus has God organized all of which we can form a conception by our organs and senses. And if next we turn our

view inward, and observe of what the living principle within us is made, and if we search in the experience of others, and in the records of past ages, which have been brought down to our times: we will again be struck with the regularity observable in the formation of the many sons of Adam, every where to be discovered. All this proves, how permanent God's counsels are, how fixed his resolutions, how unalterable his judgments! How then shall the impious dare to say, even whilst professing veneration to the Great Being, that his law, which he declared to be his will, should not have been intended as permanent? and that He made decrees, which according to the import of the words of the holy record were to everlasting, but which were nevertheless to cease, as soon as the Israelites should at any time cease to be a united people, and be no longer governed by the judicial and purely local ordinances?—Is this what you call honouring your Maker? Is this your religion? Do you thus expect to accomplish the duties demanded of you? How dare, how can you say, that you revere the Unchangeable One, whilst you profess to believe that He has changed? Never may this be the universal opinion of our people; never may the Almighty suffer such ideas to become general; for even admitting that the social laws should be of paramount importance, still they would cease to be regarded, if the ceremonial and devotional ordinances were obliterated from the law-book; for where there is no veneration for the Lord, love to man will speedily die away. And even grant that this should not be, still the inward satisfaction of a holy life would not be felt any more; and from the sick bed its consolation would be torn; the poor man would lose his comfort; and the oppressed would have nothing left to shield him from despair. Here we are brought to a point at which much more might be said; yes, the mind becomes bewildered at a view of the frightful chaos civilized society would present without the devotional feeling which lies now hidden in the bosom of every man who has once enjoyed a religious education; for, believe me, brethren, where the seed has once been sown, no weed, be it ever so noxious, can altogether choke the sacred germ; and its beneficial fruits will ripen one day, though the flowers even may not bud till the tree is hastening to decay, and the canker-worm is

ready to devour the tender fruit as soon as formed. To drop the metaphor; religion will show its presence and blessed influence, though it may have lain dormant till man is thrown upon the bed of sickness, and approaching death will barely grant him sufficient time to turn his tearful, repentant eye to Heaven.

Thus much, and more, may be said in favour of acts of worship, even when considering man only as an individual, unconnected with any other one around him. But as a second inducement to a devotional conduct we will exhibit him as a member of society, created not for his own especial benefit and amusement alone, but also for the advancement of the happiness of others. For man, as he exists, has a double existence; one as regards himself, the other as being a member of the human family at large. In the latter capacity, every one of his acts, be they good or bad, must exercise some influence upon the entire mass of men. Not alone is every good act so much positive good added to the common stock of happiness, and every evil deed an absolute diminution therefrom; but every act must likewise serve as an example, if the same be done publicly, or if it leave a trace behind by which it can at some time be made public.—For example: the respect a man pays to his parents is a good act in itself; but a two-fold good arises from it, inasmuch as other children are taught to do the same, when they see how much satisfaction the parents of the dutiful child enjoys, and how many blessings are heaped on his head for his filial piety. Now, regardless of the good he does to his parents, he is the cause of making filial obedience loved as a virtue by others; and consequently this act, which is apparently *one*, becomes a two-fold deed of virtue.—Again, we have frequently seen, that if a stranger came to a place where the greater part, not to mention the whole, were walking in meekness before the Lord, he was ready to become charmed with their course of life, and was induced to join them in their plans of goodness. Thus, also, where irreligion was predominant, that new comers commonly chimed in with the opinions entertained by the majority of the inhabitants. And, in fact, so much importance is attached to example even by the opinion of the world, that it is expected as something almost certain, that no one will be long

able to resist the force of example set him by his associates.—Worship, then, which from its nature in the Jewish religion must be public, will confer a two-fold share of benefit upon society; first, inasmuch as it tends to improve the heart of every man joining in it with sincerity; and, secondly, because the example of one may induce the wavering to become religious, and to confirm the good in their former conduct. And thus so general a feeling of obedience to the will of God may be produced, that it may freely be expected that one will incite the other to acts of piety; and in this manner too a state of harmony and friendship will spring up amidst those united together by one mode of worship, and they will learn, not only their dependence upon God, but also their relation to, and dependence upon, one another.—We may therefore maintain, that the observance of the ceremonial law tends pre-eminently to unite more closely the worshippers of God, and to promote that concord which should subsist between those who hope for the favour of the same Supreme Ruler.—In this outward exhibition of piety there need not be necessarily the least ostentation; for, as already said, worship was intended to be public, and consequently when a man enters this holy house, and worships before this holy shrine, it is not to be presumed upon any slight evidence, that he believes, or that he should wish, the eyes of others to be upon him. No; this cannot be the case where all are alike pious, alike devout, alike intent upon serving the same God, where all simultaneously invoke the protection of the same Redeemer.

Now it is this holy living, this teaching of virtue by precept and example, which we call the *sanctification of the name of the Lord*; and if a man was always careful of his religious conduct as well as moral—if the word of God was to his soul a delight—if the Sabbath of the Lord was to him a pleasure—if the house of worship was the spot which he often visited—if the poor were by him cherished, if the oppressed were by him relieved, if the slandered were by him defended: then he has sanctified the Holy Name as much as though he had died a martyr for the cause of the Lord upon the stake of the persecutor; his soul is then as pure as though his best life's-blood had freely flowed on the scaffold in acknowledging the unity of God

and maintaining the truth of his law. And although not every one is called upon to seal his faith as those great ones of former days have done by glorifying their Maker with their death: still the course just described is open to all; for this is a contest in which all can join, and a field in which all can gain an equal share of renown, a vineyard in which all can gather the same rich vintage. In truth, the humblest even has some chance of proving his devotion; if he cannot be bountiful to the poor, he can at least lend his personal aid, and if he cannot teach the world by precept, he can set a good example to those immediately around him; and there is therefore no man living who cannot, if he will, be regardful of the commandment:

וְלֹא תַחַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם קֹדְשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל :  
 וְיִקְרָא כִּבְ לֹא :

“And you shall not dishonour my holy name, and I will be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel.” Levi. xxii. 31.

O may we live to see the time, when all men shall be taught to shun sin, when all will love virtue, when all will be animated by the purest love to God, in those days, of which the prophet spoke when saying: “And the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Amen.

Iyar 14th. }  
 April 27th. } 5591.

## DISCOURSE XVI.

## THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

O THOU, our Father, Lord of heaven and earth, accept in thy grace the humble thanks which we, thy creatures and servants, have offered up to-day in this house consecrated to thy service! Vouchsafe to receive our prayers, and grant us our supplications, as Thou didst once hearken unto those, that sacrificed before thee on the holy altar in Jerusalem. Bestow on us also, in thy infinite goodness, a knowledge of thy holy ways, as Thou in former days didst enlighten the minds of the people Thou hadst redeemed from slavery, as they, prostrate at thy feet, received the commands of thy mouth in awe and trembling, and shielded by thy majesty! Amen.

## BRETHREN!

We are this day assembled here to celebrate the greatest event, to commemorate the highest of blessings, which the Almighty ever caused to gladden the hearts of thinking men, and especially of that once great people, of which we constitute but a small and feeble remnant. But I will not now enter upon a comparison of our state at the time of the promulgation of the law with our present condition; as I wish not to sadden the hearts of the community on this day of solemn rejoicing by such sad reflections; but I will only revert to a portion of the immeasurable good, which was bestowed on us in particular, and the entire mass of men in general, by the light which was shed over the world by the revelation from Sinai. I advert to the noble conceptions which we in this manner received of the attributes of the Deity; so much elevated above whatever the wisest of the heathens were ever able to discover by the aid of unassisted reason alone. And let me add, that in nothing were we more favourably distinguished above all nations of antiquity, than by the knowledge we received through God himself of his ways with man; and it seems therefore that



this day, devoted to commemorate the descent on Sinai, is peculiarly adapted to call up feelings of thanks and devotion for the great good so bountifully bestowed, and of which we can prove ourselves worthy only by a careful attention to the precepts then announced from amidst the fire and thunder by the Almighty himself, without the intervention of human agency. Not alone in the Decalogue, however, but also in other parts of Scripture, do we find the sublimest truth revealed, and among the many there is hardly one more touching, and characteristic of Israel's God, than the following from the *thirty-third* chapter of Exodus, which I wish to offer to your consideration to-day, as particularly appropriate to the festival and its institution :

וַיֹּאמֶר הֲרֵאנִי נָא אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ — וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי אֵעֲבִיר כָּל  
טוֹבִי עַל פְּנֶיךָ : שְׁמוֹת לִגְ' יח'—יט' :

“ And he (Moses) said : Show me, I pray Thee, thy glory ;—and He said, I will let all my goodness pass before thee.” Exodus xxxiii. 18-19.

Moses was standing in prayer before God on the summit of Mount Sinai, in the midst of the desert ; and his spirit was refreshed by the light of revelation, whilst he was listening with delight to the precepts which proceeded from the mouth of the Most High ; and he enjoyed thus an inexpressible pleasure, scarcely inferior to that which animates the disembodied soul, when she wings her way to Paradise, in holy ecstasy at being sent to scenes of inexhaustible bliss, from before the judgment throne of the everlasting Father.—His indeed had been a happy lot, his had been an eminence rarely reached by mortals ; since in prosperity he had never become elated with pride, nor had he ever grown faint-hearted amidst trials and dangers. For, nurtured in the bosom of pleasure in the palace of the Egyptian Pharaoh, his mind had retained its primitive purity, his soul its stainless innocence, and the adopted son of the king's daughter forgot not his brethren that groaned in slavery and degradation ; and when as a fugitive from the vindictive sword of Mitzraim's ruler he had been compelled to seek shelter in a foreign land, where, banished from the scenes of his youth, he was not permitted to share the toil

even of his own people : his heart found consolation in the goodness of God, in the overruling providence of our Parent in heaven. And there also, like other suffering righteous ones, he was taught that the innocent are not forsaken; for in the land of the stranger he found those capable of appreciating honesty and integrity of purpose, and obtained a home in the house of the chief of Midian, who bestowed on him his daughter as a token of his regard.—It was now, whilst tending the flock of his wife's father, that Moses, for the first time heard the voice of God resound in his hearing, and from on high he was deputed to effect the liberation of his brothers from slavery and oppression. With fearful signs he was enabled to force conviction upon an obdurate king; and when the task had been accomplished, when Israel had gone forth to freedom, he was acknowledged the chosen prophet and the leader of the people of God; and soon he brought them to the foot of Sinai, where was imparted to them the law, more pure than fire, and more healthful than the spirit of life itself. Who can estimate the awe, the fear, the joy, and the gladness of the people at that awful hour, when they were led forth from the camp, to where the glory of God appeared,—whilst the trumpet sounded—whilst the earth trembled—whilst the mountain smoked;—and more still at that ecstatic moment, when the terrific voice of the Eternal One spoke: "I am the Lord thy God." The mind is lost in admiration of the sublimity of the scene, and our reason is unable to comprehend, how our ancestors must have felt, when they were in truth convinced, that now indeed they were the chosen people, since it was from Heaven that their law was given!—If thus the community at large were enlightened,—if thus hidden things were revealed to them: how much more must he have seen, the man, who alone was called to the summit of the mount! Around him blazed the fiercest fire, but he remained unscathed; under him the earth shook, but his feet were firm; and when all the nation of Israel were unwilling to see the glory of God again revealed to them as it had been that day, fearing they might die: his courage never wavered, for his knowledge of divine things was greater, and his faith in divine protection was firmer, than that of any other mortal; and he beheld, and witnessed

all, with an unshaken fortitude and a steady gaze, as though it were a father coming to visit his child, as though it were a fond parent coming to instruct his beloved offspring.

But soon, alas! the scene was changed; the people who had but lately received the law, were misled by folly and presumption, and made themselves a molten calf, "the image of a grass-eating ox," and bowed down to the work of their own hands. "God perceived it and was incensed," to adopt the language of Scripture, and He ordered Moses to go down from Mount Sinai, because the people of Israel had sinned, whom he had so lately led forth from Egypt. The prophet then descended, and in his hands were the two tables of stone, inscribed by the finger of the Deity with the Ten Commandments, the words of the covenant of the Maker of all with his chosen people. But, instead of his service, instead of the adoration of the Protector of their forefathers, he beheld the calf and the dancing, the idol and its senseless worship; and unwilling to deliver to apostates the record of the covenant of everlasting life, he threw from his hands the miraculous tables, and broke them at the foot of Sinai. And in sorrow and indignation he commanded those who had remained faithful, the children of Levi, to revenge the Holy Name that had been profaned, and there fell a multitude who had bowed the knee before the abomination of the people of Egypt. When the most guilty had thus been punished, he went up again on the mount to ask forgiveness for the transgressors, and he remained there forty days and forty nights, without tasting earthly food, to secure preservation for those who had proved themselves so unworthy of God's favour; and his prayer was heard, and the threatened punishment was averted.

It was here, and at this time, that Moses, who had seen of God's ways so much more than ever had been before or since revealed to man, asked of the Lord to let him see his glory. Moses had before this beheld the power of God manifested in so many wonderful ways; he had been upheld amidst the threatenings of the greatest dangers; he had heard the words of the Supreme Wisdom, whenever the welfare of Israel required it; more wisdom and knowledge than ever had been conferred on man were his: and yet he confessed by his earnest

prayer, that to him too the Deity was a mystery, a mystery beyond what all his knowledge and wisdom could ever hope to reach.—Here let us pause.—“Show me thy glory!” thus prayed the most gifted of mortals; *not he* dared to dive into the secrets of creation; not he ventured to lift his searching view into the nature and essence of God; for amidst all that his mind had conceived, the All-powerful One yet remained hidden, a mystery too great, too holy, to be unravelled; a Being too fearful to be approached by the flights of thought.—If thus Moses acted, how darest thou, presumptuous, ignorant man, endeavour to pry into that which escaped the knowledge of the father of the prophets? weenest thou to be wiser than he, who was by God instructed?—To know what is God—to investigate the nature of his being—are these studies suitable for short-lived man? are these the points to which his inquiries should be directed? when his own being is a secret to him; and when he knows not how his own mind works, shall he direct his search into the Author of his mind?—O how true it is, that only the truly wise discover how insufficient their reason, how limited their means of research are!

The object of his second ascent to Sinai had been attained, inasmuch as the transgressions of the sinful people had been remitted, and the punishment denounced against all, inflicted upon the hardened few only: yet Moses lingered in the Sacred Presence, anxious, as said already, for more knowledge, convinced that of his own accord he could not penetrate farther. Impelled by this desire it was, that he asked of the Eternal One: “Show me, I pray Thee, thy glory;” he wanted to become more familiar with the being of the Deity, than a view of outward nature permits to man; he wished to discover why things were organized as they are; to understand, how the power of God works in secret every thing which we perceive by our senses. It was here also, whilst standing on the mount, that he was answered to his prayer by the words of the Almighty: “I will let all my goodness pass before thee.” Let it be observed in what manner God granted Moses’s wish for extended knowledge. Moses, not satisfied with all he had seen, desired to witness the power of Heaven manifested in a more striking degree than it had been hitherto in his presence; he

petitioned for an increased sphere of understanding, conceiving that which he possessed to be as yet incomplete. But he was answered, that to him, as man, no farther knowledge could be granted, and that he must, therefore, not hope for a more extended view of the Divine Being; "for no man," says the text, "can see me and live;" but in lieu of this, he was promised, as something more suitable for human nature, to have the goodness of God more clearly displayed to him, and to be shown more strongly than hitherto, how kind and benevolent are the ways of the Infinite and Merciful One, towards his creatures! How profound a theme for meditation this presents to our mind! The goodness of God is his glory! for so was Moses taught to satisfy his thirst for further wisdom and knowledge of the ways of the Lord. Ask we then: "What is God?" we shall discover, that He is good, and that to his kindness alone, all owe their being, that to His benevolence all are indebted for their preservation, and that to His providence all are compelled to look for happiness.—"No man can see me and live." No, not whilst our soul is yet entangled in her mortal habiliment can she approach nearer to the Fountain of light—not in this state of decay can she elevate herself above the material world—and not in this life of change and corruption can she comprehend the nature of the Pure Spirit!—But his workings she can discover in the vasty ocean, the star-spangled sky, the murmuring brook, the pathless desert, the howling storm, the leaf-clad forest, in the summer's heat, and the winter's frost; his deeds of grace she can behold, as He provideth sustenance to all that lives, from the mighty elephant to the minutest insect; and his universal mercy she can view in profound veneration, as his protection is held out over the sinner as well as the righteous; and to Him she can fly for refuge, to him she can look for consolation, as He is mighty to help, and no one can say to him: "What doest Thou?"—If then, traveller on the midnight road, thou art surrounded by dangers, dangers too great for thee to overcome: reflect that thou art protected by the Father of mercy, and that not a hair from thy head can fall to the ground without his sufferance, and that nought can injure thee, unless permission from Him be given! If even bodily harm should come over thee, if even

the ruthless assassin should bare his murdering blade against thy defenceless bosom: turn up thy eye to thy God in undiminished hope, for He is ever with thee, ever good alike, ever kind, and mid suffering and death He can lead thee to immortal happiness.—Suffering brother, who liest on the bed of sickness, whose bones are filled with the pains of a burning disease, whose mouth is parched by the fatal fever, whose tongue cleaves to the palate in speechless agony: do not despair, let thy spirit not flag, for if thou art even called hence, be assured, that He, the Gracious One, will comfort—support—and bless thee, though death has closed thy mortal eye, and stopped the functions of thy decaying body!—But thou too, erring brother, who hast forsaken the path of our God's holy law, who hast by thy acts bid defiance to his all-wise rule, who hast ever striven to gratify the cravings of thy unholy passions;—thou, who now mournest at the thoughts of thy great derelictions, who despairest because of thy iniquity, who art unable to relieve thyself from the horrid torment of the gnawing worm of conscience;—thou, who seest thyself forsaken by all earthly help, and despised by the very associates of thy crimes:—yes, erring brother, even thou despair not, for though much thou hast sinned, although great have been thy transgressions, reflect, that the Creator is much more merciful by far than thy sins are great, that to his beneficence there is no end, and that it would be presumptuous folly to set bounds to His forgiveness! And only return with an unshaken confidence in His goodness, only imagine not thy sins too great to be forgiven, and thou mayest approach the footstool of Grace with hopes of pardon. And if thou art then chastised according to thy misdeeds, think not thyself rejected, but consider, that our ancestors' ingratitude was forgiven, but that still a moderate punishment was inflicted, to show that, although God is merciful, forgives sin and will not destroy, still sin cannot go without retribution. This is the glory of God which was shown to Moses, and thus it was made manifest to him, how far it is becoming for man to search into the ways of his Creator.

“I will let all my goodness pass before thee,” and so indeed it did happen; and the power of God passed before Moses on Mount Sinai, whilst he, the chosen servant, stood in the hol-

low of the rock at Horeb, and before him was proclaimed : “The Eternal Lord is an everlasting Being, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in beneficence and truth ; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, but who will not suffer sin to go unpunished.” This is the revelation of the glory of God, and in this we acknowledge a kind and just Being, who, when forgiving sin, punishes past transgression with paternal chastisement, and thus shows, that there is a discrimination between his adorers and those that forsake his service ! Moses, the man of God, saw the cloud in which the glory of the Most High had descended, he heard the attributes of God announced, and he bowed his head, and threw himself prostrate on the ground, adoring and revering his God more than ever, and feeling the presumption of seeking the glory of the Creator in any thing else, save his goodness ; where indeed is sealed up all the mystery of our being and all the hopes of a glorious futurity, after our departure hence to dwell for ever in a better world.

May the grace and goodness of the Lord be always with you, and protect and comfort you in life and in death. Amen.

Sivan 5th. }  
May 17th. } 5591.

NOTE.—The above address was written, by request of an esteemed friend, as an illustration of the eighteenth and nineteenth verses of the thirty-third chapter of Exodus. It will be perceived, that I have followed the English version, although I am well aware that the word טוב, rendered *goodness*, may also mean *property* or *possession*. Still the selection of this word instead of כבוד, used by Moses, must refer to the quality or attribute of goodness more immediately than to a display of extraordinary power. Add to which, that Moses had asked to be made acquainted with God's ways ; to which he was answered, that the Lord would be merciful to those He thought deserving ; implying, that it is not for man to ponder too much upon his government.—This discourse is merely a sketch, an illustration more than a commentary, and, consequently, its brevity and apparent want of connexion, must not be too severely judged. The limits of a note will not permit me to say more, besides the text must speak for itself.

## DISCOURSE XVII.

## THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

GLORY and adoration to our everlasting King and almighty Ruler. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

Of all things which we call certain, and upon the coming of which we confidently rely in our earthly career: nothing is more certain, nothing more inevitable, than the close of this career, the death of the body.—In every undertaking, no matter how well every thing may have been arranged, if even so, as almost to preclude disappointment: disappointment may nevertheless ensue, and mar the confident hopes of the deceived expectant; but unless the miraculous hand of God interferes, to snatch his servants from the jaws of death, as it happened with Enoch and Elijah, no human being can escape the return to dust; for no human power is able to avert the impending dissolution of the bodily organs, or to oppose aught to the severing of the mind from matter. It has been so decreed, ever since our first progenitors sinned in Eden, that man should be mortal, subject to decay and corruption, and that however long the day of death be delayed, come it must, nay, perhaps unawares, like the thief in the night, who enters the defenceless and unwatched dwelling, when no one expects or dreads his coming.—It behoves us, therefore, and every other member of Adam's sinful race, to reflect on: What is life? what is death?—what influence have both upon the constitution and nature of man? Life, to judge from our experience, is the state of existence in which created beings act and suffer; and death is the state, when the body of these creatures ceases to act, and cannot, to appearance, be benefited or harmed by the acts of others. But this is true of the body only, and in this man is similar to the beast, for that too acts while it lives, and is beyond the power of harm when dead.—Yet, if this were all that be-



longs to man of life, not so much anxiety were needed to endeavour to obtain comforts and to obviate evil; not then would it be matter of importance to acquire a knowledge of more than our eyes can behold or the ears hear; not then would it be proper, that men should traverse the trackless ocean in quest of the products of foreign climes; not then would it be useful to restrain the passions, and protect one from the evil intentions of the other; since the mere clay, which must perish, and perish too before the thousandth part of all desires is satisfied, deserves not more care than the beast of the field or the bird of heaven requires, that takes its food wherever it finds it, and that dies as soon as the animal functions cease to operate from inward decay, or when it falls a prey to the cupidity of man or the cunning and superior strength or address of other animals. But in addition to the experience derived from bodily sensations, and the ideas acquired by means of the outward organs, there is a feeling within us, a monitor, which teaches, that life is not confined to outward, bodily actions, and that death is not the extinction of the vital spark.—For if we pursue a train of thought, we will soon discover, that although as men our ideas are inseparable from matter in the various shapes in which it exists, we are yet able to extend our search beyond the objects which come immediately under our view or of which we have any particular knowledge from personal experience, and that in fact very often our greatest joys and our most poignant afflictions are produced by imagination and reflection. What, I ask, has this thought, unconnected with any particular outward object, to do with the dull, inert, selfish mass of clay of which our outward forms are made? Is it in the power of mere sentient matter to erect, so to speak, a structure of imagery to delight or depress the feeling? In what manner could the animal sensation of the human system enable us to go beyond ourselves from a serious contemplation of nature—and next, to let this view of nature exert a permanent influence over us, so much so as perhaps to induce us even to change the line of conduct upon which we have been hitherto acting? And is it not notorious, that many a careless one has had his attention arrested, and has been roused to reflection by contemplating, in moments of joy or sadness, the great works of the great Architect?

“But truly there is a spirit within men, and the mind of God maketh them wise;” this we are told by the sacred writer, and this our experience, the child of *mental* reflection teaches, and in this our nature is so much elevated above that of the brute; and it is by the operations of mind and not of matter that we are taught to feel that we are creatures of a merciful God, and that to Him our spirit returneth, when its connexion with the perishable body is dissolved.—Life, therefore, is the connected existence of a divine spirit with an animal body, which compound state enables man to do whatever is necessary for his self-preservation, and to judge at the same time of things presented to the consideration of his mind, which mind, however, is restrained from having a correct and perfect view in all cases of the nature and object of things, since it is encumbered with sensual organs, which from their constitution are disqualified from comprehending aught essentially different from their bodily substance. And death is the dismemberment of this connexion, by which the body is rendered unfit for the further service of the soul, and by which the latter is freed from the encumbrance of the clay; and which dissolution renders her exempt from calamities and circumstances attendant upon bodily organs. If this is admitted to be the nature of man, his life and his death: it follows that, since death is not the annihilation of the human system, life—so called—is a state of preparation, in which it is our business to endeavour to acquire the means necessary to fit us for the impending altered state of existence; unless one could persuade himself that human life had been so admirably organized without any reference to an ulterior object. When, however, we look inquiringly into nature, we shall find that nothing is without its object; since even to our obscured reasoning powers the causes of many things, animate and inanimate, are apparent, and we are able to show how they are connected link by link with the great universal principle which pervades all. To judge then from analogy, human life also has its ulterior reason, and it remains to be discovered what this reason may be; or in other words, we ought to inquire: “What course are we to pursue, according to the institution of our Creator, that we may be ready and prepared for the altered state of existence for which we are destined?” If now we had not a re-

velation of God to guide us, if we had no conception of his intentions, we might live the brief space allotted to us according to the impulse of our feelings; we might then presume that actions prompted by the outward senses are the proper deeds, by which we can prepare ourselves for the future. But we have a revelation of God's will, we have a system of rules from the All-wise Father, which were evidently instituted for our benefit; and we maintain therefore that it is the law of the Lord which points out to us the means we are to employ to prepare ourselves for death. Let us then look into the book of revelation, let us examine the records of God's wisdom, and the testimony of his rule on earth: and we shall be informed that it is his wish that every man should inherit happiness, and be deserving of unchangeable satisfaction, with this only condition, that each and every member of the human family should earn this happiness for himself by his own acts, or regain the same by a sincere repentance and an humble submission to divine dispensation, in case he has thoughtlessly lost sight for a time of the path of righteousness. For although to sin is contrary to our happiness, still the Almighty will graciously accept a forsaking of the evil; inasmuch as our nature is not free from evil inclination, nor our mind at all times fit to understand the ways of Providence; and as thus sinning, even with forethought, may proceed from ignorance and inattention, God will not utterly reject the sinner, because He is great and cognizant of our weakness. Since as we have said, while the soul is yet connected with the body she is prevented from having a perfect and correct view of the nature of all things, owing to her receiving her impressions through means of material organs, which from their very constitution are unable to comprehend things essentially different in their composition from the qualities of matter. This being the case in our state of mixed existence, of flesh and spirit, it is not to be wondered at, that, misled by appearance, we may be induced, unless we guard ourselves carefully, to regard that as important which is really trifling, and even to mistake the evil for the good. If then we act from these erroneous impressions, trusting to our knowledge and judgment as efficient guides, it is almost necessary that we should be led into innumerable errors, and practise the evil in-

stead of the good, and offend our heavenly King by the wickedness of our works. But if we, fully alive to our imperfections and watchful over the persuasions of bodily organs, firmly resolve to be guided by the instructions of divine revelation: it is necessary that we should become virtuous; nay more, that we should be enabled to go counter to our natural impulses, if they interfere with the dictates of God's will; and we may thus be rendered righteous, as far as being righteous is compatible with our nature.

And since now death is the aim and termination of earthly life, since from the moment of our birth we verge onward to eternity: how sweet must be the departure of him who, having always the certain end in view, invariably acted in a manner calculated to enable him to enter into the impending altered state of being, into the more immediate presence of God, free from the faults which the holy law interdicts!—Imagine to yourselves, brethren, the righteous laid on the bed of his last sickness, think of him how his peace is made with God and men, how serenely and tranquilly he may look upon death, which will once more and indissolubly unite him with his Father—see him how his eye is unclouded, whilst all around him weep—imagine this, and then answer me, is not such a death an object worth living for? Who will say a long life is misspent, when such an end crowns the suffering mortal, when it is almost evident, even to us, that immortal glory awaits him?—But reverse the picture, and behold the careless sinner, to whom it always appeared that the gratification of the senses was the greatest good, to whom the acts of religion seemed unmeaning deeds of slavish worship, to whom it could not be made intelligible that the providence of God watches over every act and thought, to reward or punish after death, as well as during life: see him, how the blush of shame at last mantles on his cheek, confounded at his now exposed sins; behold him standing in speechless degradation before his earthly judges, who will condemn him to the solitary prison for the wrong done to his neighbour's property, or order him to execution for having dyed his hands in a brother's blood; or if he even be not publicly exposed, but suffered to drag on a miserable existence, a burthen to himself and an intolerable load to others, since,

go where he will, his awakened conscience will smite him, will disturb his waking and sleeping thoughts: imagine, brethren, such a sinner at his end, and what must his sensations be! He regards himself as despised of men, forsaken by God, and abhorred by himself—and yet, he must hence, no longer respite can be granted; justice will be satisfied; death will have his prey; and oh! the guilty one passes away, a spectacle, an example, a by-word to others; the crowd is admonished to take warning of his ignominious end, historians will dwell on his horrible agonies, his unmitigated sufferings, his dreadful imprecations; and speak, who would not willingly undergo the greatest bodily pains, if assured that his departure should be smoothed, and be made free from such trials? And yet we see persons who run the course of vice, exposing themselves thus voluntarily to ignominy and shame; but this is owing to their forgetting that they are mortal, and because they imagine, that when they have succeeded in veiling their misdeeds from public view, they have nothing to apprehend from the interference of Providence; when they should know that to God they must return, whether they deny his superintendence or not, and render an account before Him, the Judge, to whom naught is concealed, and to whom the past, the present, and the future are alike known! But the righteous considers well, that “he is dust, and to dust he must return,” and knows that God observes all his ways; he therefore trains his mind betimes to an obedience to the will of Heaven, and when his hour of departure then arrives, he descends to the grave like the refulgent sun into the silvery ocean at the close of a serene summer’s day, shedding with his last ray a glorious, mellow, and hallowed light, as he becomes gradually concealed from the enraptured view of the admiring beholder!—It was inspired by feelings of this nature, influenced by a knowledge of the beneficial effects of the divine law, that the heathen prophet, Bileam, spoke by the inspiration of the Almighty’s sacred mind, as follows:

תמת נפשי מות ישרים ותהי אחריתי כמהו

במדרב כנ' י'

“May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like his.” Numb. xxiii. 10.

It is indeed for such an end that we are to work and exert our energies ; for what is all the happiness that may fall to our lot on this earth, if we are at last to perish away like the beast of the field, or what would be almost worse, if it were not that existence even under suffering is better far than non-existence, to be doomed to punishment after death for a period which our sins may demand from the justice of God ? Well must it be for each of us, if we take our life and its close daily and hourly into consideration, if we suffer neither prejudice nor self-love to blind us, and to persuade us to close our eyes upon our failings and transgressions. We are but too apt to turn away our view from the consequences of one act, for we say, it is but a single folly ; but every folly, every fault, every sin, will disqualify us in some respect from relishing the good and holy ; and where is the necessity of purchasing salvation by repentance, when we can enjoy ease of mind and the good-will of God and men by an uniform virtuous conduct ? To repent when we have sinned, to fly to the arms of our merciful Father in sincere confidence of his forgiveness, shows a filial devotion to the Almighty, which should be encouraged in every instance upon the discovery of an aberration from the righteous way. But as repentance is at best but a remedy, it must be evident, that it would be far better to adhere always to the law ; since if we act otherwise, we may be overtaken by death before we have time to alter our course ; and whom can we blame for our dying with all our sins on our head, with all our follies unforgiven, except it be ourselves, who, careless of our spiritual welfare, disregard the warning voice which daily speaks to us, by the example of others, that life is short, and its termination uncertain ?—Besides this great advantage of an uniform virtuous life, there is yet another, which is, that it makes the person so acting always beloved by all the world ; and when the good depart, no matter what age they may have reached, their place will always seem unfilled by any one of those left behind ; and when an excellent person is removed, it strikes us as though something necessary to our comfort had been withdrawn. We do not pity the death of the good, for we feel that their happiness is well secured ; but we lament for ourselves, that we can no longer enjoy their example and be improved by their pre-

cepts. But let the wicked die, how it almost makes us shudder to think of their pain, their inglorious perishing; and an involuntary feeling of anguish will come over us, and we must lament their unhappiness, although compelled to acknowledge, that the world has gained by their removal from amongst active beings, since now they have it no longer in their power to harm others and to injure themselves by their deeds of wickedness.—This is but a small portion of the difference existing between the death of the righteous and of the wicked, and the few distinguishing traits here exhibited will doubtlessly be enough to demonstrate the superiority of virtue over vice, although there were no greater pre-eminence to the former over the latter.

Although it is unbecoming to make personal allusions to the faults of any individual in a public address, I do not apprehend that any objection can be made to my passing a deserved tribute of respect to the worth of a departed friend, one to whom nearly, if not all of those who now hear me, used to pay the homage due to age and virtue. I speak of our excellent sister\* and friend, whom we followed this week to the grave. She lived long, and perhaps as happily, as but few mortals can ever expect to live. But she deserved this long life and this happiness, for during all the period of eighty and five years, the breath of slander dared never to fasten upon her, and under all the trials to which she was exposed in common with all the rest of mankind, she exhibited the fortitude well becoming a daughter of Israel, who knows her God, and knows too, that to confide in Him is the best support. And also the esteem of all who became acquainted with her was cheerfully yielded, and unless I am much deceived, there are few or none, that did not admire her social and religious virtues, and by whom she was not regarded with filial reverence. But at last the hour of her dissolution came, and although the close of her life was

\* The late Mrs. Rebecca Phillips, widow of Jonas Phillips, and daughter of David Mendes Machado, formerly Reader of the Congregation Sheerith Israel in New York, who died about the year 5510, (1750).—This excellent woman lived to an age exceeding eighty-five years, and departed this life on Tuesday the 10th of Tamuz, in the year 5591, corresponding with 21st of June, 1831.

painful, yet in mercy the illness that preceded it was of but few days' duration; and full of years and honours, we consigned her to the tomb, there to sleep till the Father of all wakens the slumberers in the dust to everlasting life and happiness.—Should not the example of this excellent person animate us to imitate her good deeds, and endeavour to avoid any errors (since all mortals are liable to err) which we may discover in her ways? Such a line of conduct will render us good and religious, and ensure us the favour of God and the love of men. Perhaps, however, the uniform prosperity of our late sister may not attend every one of us; but we ought to consider, that not for reward should we be good, but that through weal and woe we are bound to adhere to our righteousness, taking the law of God as our guide-star to the haven of happiness; so that living faithfully in the faith and fear of the Lord, we may at the last be able to breathe out our spirit as did the righteous men of old, and deserve, that our end should be like theirs, untrammelled by sin, and freed from the pollution to which our mortal body and sinful propensities may have inadvertently exposed us.

May the God of our fathers bless us all with his grace, and render our life free from intense bodily suffering, and give us every day our necessary support, so that we may be exempt from corroding care and temptation to sin; and when the hour of our death has come may He make easy for us our departure hence, and, receiving us in favour, bestow on us the undying light of his presence, and the reward which He has laid by for those who confide in Him, and observe his statutes. Amen.

Tamuz 12th. }  
June 23d. } 5591.



## DISCOURSE XVIII.

## THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

PROTECTOR of Israel! comfort thy people in their mourning, and pardon their transgressions, and lighten the pressure of their burden, and remove the shame which they now suffer among nations. And O, send the angel of mercy to heal their wounds, and redeem them from destruction, and say to them in the words of thy inspired one: "I have found a ransom!" Amen.

## BRETHREN!

Of all virtues, which grace human nature, patriotism is one which possesses something so holy, a certain approach to angelic disinterestedness: that we may freely say, that, next to assisting an enemy in the hour of his distress, it is the noblest feeling in which we can indulge. I allude not to the ambition which assumes the garb of patriotism, merely to elevate itself to distinction in the state; I speak not of the murderous lust, which animates the soldier of fortune in his search of an imperishable name by deeds of daring and violence; but of him, who stands forth in his country's defence, when danger approaches, regardless of consequences; and of the inobtrusive citizen who in his humble sphere yields every thing—life, liberty, and wealth—in the service of his home, his own native land; for he only is a true patriot to whom can be awarded the merit of loving his country for its own sake, but not for the purpose of obtaining lucre, power, or renown.—Let such a patriot be ever so distant from the home of his childhood, ever so far from the land of his birth, to it his mind will revert; nay, though his countrymen have treated him with ingratitude or undeserved wrong, he will still be willing to act the part of a good citizen, despite of the ill-treatment he may have encountered. And the exile too will think with fond regret of

the spot, where his parents repose in their graves, to the place, where he first indulged in his youthful plays; and no land upon earth can awaken in him those feelings of ardour and devotion, which his native soil calls up within his bosom.—If we apply these general principles to our own particular condition, it behoves us to inquire: “Which is the country that the collective nation of Israelites can call their own land?” Is it this land, where freedom dwells? Is it the land of the Spaniard, where the name of freedom is almost unknown? Is it the wide desert of central Asia, where the barbarous Tatar feeds his countless herds? Is it the country, where the Russian despot rules with tyrannic sway?—No! no! it is the favoured land of the East, where the Israelites dwelled of yore, it is the land which God covenanted to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to their seed after them; it is the land of the Lebanon, which the dying prophet desired so ardently to see; it is the land, where the once beautiful Jerusalem yet stands although in ruins; it is the land, where stood in olden days the sacred temple, resplendent once in all the beauty of holiness, but which our transgressions, alas! caused to be twice destroyed, when our people fell into the hand of their enemies! This is the land which is the Israelite’s home, and he should always regard himself as having an interest in its soil, although he has been born in exile, in the country of the stranger, far from the banks of the lowly Jordan; for there it was, where our national glory reached its highest elevation, and because we have remained scattered and disunited, ever since we were driven thence.—Do not misunderstand me as saying, that you should not regard the country in which you live as your own, and that you should not endeavour to serve it according to the best of your abilities; for we are commanded by the prophet, speaking in the name of God, “to seek the peace of the city to which we have been banished.” As Jews, therefore, and believers in the revealed law and the prophets, we are bound to obey the laws of the land and to uphold the authorities in every instance, where their edicts are not at variance with the commandments of God. Every Israelite is accordingly obliged to contribute to the maintenance of the state, and it would be unpardonable in any one to endeavour to avoid paying the government dues by any frau-

duleat device whatsoever. In inculcating, therefore, a love for Palestine, it must by no means be understood as in any manner teaching and enforcing a diminished love for our present abode; nay more, according to our rules, it is wrong to offend against the laws of a despotic country; how much more then ought we to observe this regulation in this and other countries, where we have a small share in the legislation, by having the equal right to vote for the representatives of the people, who enact the laws.—Still, as we have said in the beginning of these remarks, the home of the Israelite is the distant land of Moria, where the glory of the Lord used to shine and instruct the children of his choice; and if we take but a rapid view of our national history, it can be readily shown that we have lost much by having been hurried from the boundaries of our own—our father-land.

After the flood had swept away the sinful race of men from the surface of the earth, and left Noah alone with his family to repeople the earth: we find that those born after this catastrophe learnt in an incredibly short time to dispense with the service of God, undeterred by the destruction of their predecessors, and they worshipped the most disgusting creatures of their fancy; nay, that their apostacy proceeded so far as to make it dangerous for any one to avow his attachment to the Creator. It was then that a man arose in the land of Chaldea, whose name was Abram, the ancestor, as you all know, of our people, who acknowledged and worshipped the Most High alone, the Maker of heaven and earth. The patriarch, ordered by Him he adored, left his native land and his father's house, and wandered unto the neighbourhood of Hebron in the land of Canaan, where he erected an altar and spread abroad the light which was within him, and he taught an ignorant people the knowledge of that Being, to whom alone their reverence was due. Now it must be observed, that it was this same land, at present known under the name of Palestine, which God promised to him as an inheritance for his descendants; and He told him, that they should return to it, after a temporary absence, at the expiration of four centuries, and be left in the quiet possession of it, whilst they observed the covenant and precepts of the Lord. It therefore came to pass, that when

the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham by his grandson Jacob, surnamed Israel, had been released from Egypt, a deputation of the people entered the land of Canaan, exactly at the expiration of the appointed time, to survey the country they were ordered to conquer. And when they had been led through the wilderness for a period of forty years, under the guidance of Moses, detained so long for their rebellion, ten times repeated, and for the sake of fortifying them in faith towards the Lord: they were led by Joshua, the servant and disciple of Moses, over the Jordan into the land promised unto their ancestors. Here they dwelt for the space of nine hundred years, governed by their own laws, administered by men chosen by and from amongst themselves. And here too they might have dwelt for ever, with none to make them afraid, if they had been mindful of the covenant, and had observed the statutes which alone were the firm foundation of their commonwealth. But, for the law of God they substituted the dictates of their own fancy; and following the example of other nations, they worshipped idols, things that could not save, and eventually neglected altogether the precepts of the law.—It had been foretold to them by Moses, that apostacy would be followed by expulsion from their lovely inheritance; and they had, therefore, every reason to expect the threatened punishment as the instantaneous consequence of their transgression. But the Father of mercy, knowing the weakness of human nature, delayed his anger for a long time; and to warn the people, and in order to recal them from their errors, He sent men, inspired by superior knowledge and renowned for their piety, to incite their sinning brethren to repentance; but all was in vain; for if even one generation returned and sought the Lord, the succeeding one added wicked sinfulness to the apostacy of their predecessors; till at length it became an act of mercy to expel the children of Jacob from their land, to obviate by the timely punishment the utter estrangement of the chosen people of God. It therefore happened, that the kingdom of Israel, so called, was subverted by the Assyrians, who drove away the inhabitants to the cities of Media and to other places, and substituted in their stead various foreign tribes, all subject to the sway of the Assyrian king.—The kingdom of

Judah, composed of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with the Levites, who had been banished from the rival state, ought now to have taken warning at the example of awful retribution exhibited before their eyes. In fact, Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, king of Judah, rejected his father's idolatry, and governed the people in piety, a worthy successor of his glorious ancestor, David; he re-established the holy worship; and in his days it was really that the prophecy of Isaiah, in calling the child, expected at the time when Ahaz was threatened by the kings of Israel and Syria, "the Prince of Peace" was fulfilled, and it seemed that the favour of God had again been bestowed on the exhausted land. But the pious king was gathered unto his fathers, and all the good accomplished by him was more than counterbalanced by his unworthy son Menasseh, and by all the succeeding kings, with the sole exception of Josiah, who was, as we are told, sincerely repentant, a true adorer of God, and an enemy to all apostacy. The punishment, therefore, so long denounced, could now be no longer averted; and when, under the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of David's line, the measure of our sins was nearly overflowing, Nebuchadnezzar, permitted by the justice of Heaven, conquered the holy city, and led the remainder of the Israelites, that had escaped the slaughter, captives to Babylon, and he left none but the poorer classes, who however soon fled to Egypt, to escape the dreaded vengeance of the Babylonians for the murder of Gedaliah. Thus was the strength of Israel broken; thus was all that was grand and beautiful demolished, and Palestine, once so populous and powerful, was left without an inhabitant; till at length God inclined the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, to mercy, and he permitted the Jews to return and to rebuild their city and temple. Let us observe, that by this return of the captives, the Israelitish nation was not restored; since the ten tribes, who formerly had composed the kingdom of Israel, were yet left in banishment; and to this day the researches of travellers and wise men have not been able to trace their fate; and we are unable to tell whether they are living in some remote land as firm adherents of the God of their fathers, whose chastening hand they have felt; or whether they have, mingling with the nations, learned to do as they do, and are now a part of the wild Afghans or

some other barbarous tribe. This deplorable dismemberment, the consequence of the crimes of our ancestors, followed in the train of the destruction of the first temple; and where has been, since that period, the pomp and glory of David and Solomon's reign? the distinguished religious knowledge of the days of Hezekiah? or the fervent zeal displayed by all classes under Josiah? and when had we the wise admonitions of the prophets? or the animating strains of the Psalmists after the rebuilding of the temple?—But this second temple was nevertheless in a measure much more glorious than the first, since, during the period of its existence, the name of the Lord became more known to the nations of the earth, and even the enemies of the Jews were, by their intercourse with them, taught a purer law, and they caught a glimpse as it were of the pure truths which are contained in our code. The false ideas of Grecian philosophers with regard to the divine nature received a shock from which they have never recovered, by the translation, and consequent farther diffusion, of the Pentateuch by the seventy elders under the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Lagos; and thus it was verified, that “the glory of the second house should be greater, than that of the first,” built by Solomon, the outward splendour of which far surpassed that of the one erected by the handful of exiles, whom Cyrus permitted to revisit their desolate land. Add to which, that idolatry, as a national crime, was unknown during the entire period under discussion, and that the individual zeal of a great number of pious persons was now continually exerted to preserve the law unmixed, by multiplying copies of the same and expounding obscure texts: and we have enough to assert, that the prediction of the prophet was literally accomplished.—But amid all this greatness, crime made again its baleful inroads upon our state; and the barter for the sacred office of high-priest; the streams of innocent blood that deluged the streets of Jerusalem; the dissention of parties; the calling in of the Romans to settle domestic disputes for the supreme rule: all, all, tended to sap the foundation of the edifice, and once more the structure of the Jewish state was pulled down, and every thing was overwhelmed in one, vast, dreadful, annihilation! Yes, it was under the Roman emperors, that year after year the independence of the

Jews was circumscribed within narrower limits; till the people were goaded into revolt during the reign of Nero, and the protracted war that ensued did not cease, till Jerusalem was demolished and the temple laid in ashes! In a discourse of last year, I endeavoured to sketch in few words the horrors of this war, the obstinacy of the defence, and the unremitting activity of the assailants! But what tongue can describe the misery, the agony, and the painfulness of the unavailing struggle, when the devoted and heroic defenders at length saw the walls broken, and the enemy pouring in through every breach; and when they, the famished, after having in vain attempted to stem the onward torrent, by exposing their breasts to the merciless invaders, beheld the temple—for which all their energies had been exerted—committed to the flames; and when they saw the devouring, unquenchable fire seize on the holy of holies, and the unwavering priests of the Lord perish at the steps of the altar, which even in death they would not forsake!—This happened on the ninth of Ab, a day marked for the unfortunate events which befel our people, and on it the sun of Israel set; and the contest after this time was merely the last throb of the expiring heart which ceased at length to beat, after the mortal shafts of the enemy had pierced it to the core. It were well if we could say, that, with the destruction of our metropolis, the fury of the Romans had been appeased; but no, they even unsheathed their swords and plunged them deep into the lifeless corse, for those that had escaped the famine, the sword, and the conflagration which devastated their native land, were exposed to new cruelties by their ruthless captors; some were kept to struggle with wild beasts for the amusement of the refined Romans in their hours of leisure, and others were reserved for a worse fate even, since they were sold as slaves in distant lands; and they, who had been reared amid luxury and elegance, were compelled to bend their necks beneath the yokes of their new Egyptian task-masters! Was not this a dreadful fulfilment of the denunciation of Moses, who said: “And the Lord will bring thee back to Egypt in ships—and you shall be offered there for sale as male and female slaves, and there shall be no buyers?” Thus, my brethren, was our unfortunate people treated, because they had not served their

God in sincerity; and for refusing obedience to his mild sway, they were trodden under foot and spurned, and their sorrow even scoffed at, by those whom he brought over them as the instruments of his righteous wrath and indignation! And ask we: "What was the subsequent fate of the Jews?" we shall be answered by the history of many dark centuries, that they were carried into every corner of God's earth, and that in every spot, where they obtained a place of refuge, persecution overtook them, and they were surrendered to scorn, to pillage, to stripes, to torture, and to the scaffold.—Have we not then cause to mourn? are we not bound, as members of the Jewish nation, to pay the patriot's homage to our far off land? and what tribute can we offer, but our sorrow for the overthrown walls, our grief for the devastated homes, and our tears for the countless millions who fell manfully fighting for their land, and for the altars of their God;—and for those who were butchered, because they were descendants of the proscribed race;—and for those, who bled on the scaffold, because they could not be base hypocrites enough to deny the truth of the everlasting covenant of the Mosaic law?—But, asks one: "Why shall we mourn at this distance from Palestine, and after the lapse of so many centuries? what can that regret avail, which we breathe forth in our Synagogues and houses? will this reunite the Israelites? will this rebuild the temple?"—To a truly feeling mind, to a heart alive to the sublimities of the heavenly law, no answer need be made to such questions, for it were useless to illustrate that which to pious men explains itself. But we will speak to him, who perhaps may waver, and whose heart is not entire with the Lord; perhaps our labour may be rewarded by succeeding to draw into our circle another brother to unite with the mourners for Zion!—It is asked; "Why shall we regret Jerusalem in a land where universal freedom reigns?" But let me ask in return: Do all Israelites dwell here? where is the multitude, who yet suffers every indignity in the country of the impious ruler of Russia, who dares to style himself self-ruler, as though he were not amenable to God's tribunal for his deeds of oppression? are those Israelites free, who in Spain and Portugal are not permitted to avow their descent even, except it be under the protection of a



feigned apostacy? Yes, brethren, unless Jews in all countries of the world had equal freedom, this objection cannot bear the semblance of reason, for none can be bold enough to assert, that the Israelites are saved by being at rest in one, or a few countries at most, whilst every where else they are suffering and oppressed. But even suppose, that in the process of time the march of civilization were to break down the walls of prejudice, and induce all the rulers of the earth to place Jews upon a perfect equality with their other subjects or citizens: even then, I say, we should have cause to observe, annually, the day of the destruction of Jerusalem as a day of humiliation and fasting, since under the most favourable aspect of things, we cannot indulge the hope, that we shall be permitted to be governed by our own laws; and let happen what will, we can never form our scattered remains into one united society, till it pleases God to restore us to our land; and thus be we *slaves* or *citizens*, as Jews we should ever regard the non-possession of Palestine as a great national evil, which we cannot enough deplore. For let us ask: "Where is the temple—where the public sacrifices—where the imposing worship on the Day of Atonement—where the outpouring of the divine inspiration through the Urim and Thumim? Where, again, are the august Sanhedrin—where can we find the simple, just, and prompt judgment of the Mosaic code?"—All, all, has been lost by the destruction of Jerusalem and by the dispersion of the tribes of Jacob!

Again, it is asked: "Why should we mourn at this distance of time?" But let me ask in return: Does distance of time lessen the evil? Are we less exiles, because we have been exiles for near eighteen hundred years? or, do you wish it said, that Jews have lost their national feelings because they no longer live in Palestine, and because the punishment inflicted has been so long continued on account of their obduracy in not repenting? But the time has not yet come, when it can be said with truth, that we have ceased to feel like Jews, and let us breathe the fervent hope, that such a time may never come. And I appeal to you all, brethren, whether you are not always affected with sorrow at hearing, that in any quarter of the globe our brethren are oppressed. What proves this, but that no time nor place

can reconcile us, not even the most careless, to be indifferent spectators of the maltreatment of the Jew as such ; and should we not then mourn for the event, which was the beginning of all these oft-repeated calamities ?

And in reference to the last objection : “What good can this regret do? Can it rebuild the temple, or reunite the Israelites?” We reply, that much good may result to the Jewish community, by their turning unitedly every year to the state of their former splendour and glory, with a regret which such sad reflection is calculated to call up, for it must tend to bind all closely together, when every one feels, that he is in truth a member of a noble people, and that all the evil effects of distance of time and place, of scorn, of difficulties, of temptations, have been, and will always be unable to sever those sacred ties, which bind the Israelites, individually and collectively to their Father in heaven. If, then, our regret cannot rebuild the temple, it will keep the religion of our forefathers alive and active in our hearts ; if our sorrow cannot reunite the nation in *one* land, it will at least link together the hearts of all believers, be they ever so far separated by oceans, by deserts, by the eternal snows of the pole, or the burning sand of Africa’s inhospitable clime. More than this need not be urged in reply to the foregoing objections : for if religion is not entirely out of the mind, the short explanations given must be amply sufficient to remove them.

Let us then, brethren, unite from year to year, whilst we live in foreign lands, to pay the patriot’s tribute, the exile’s tear, to the deserted homes of our ancestors ; and let us devote the days of fasting appointed by the prophets, to mourn over the fallen glory of Jacob that has departed, over the sun of Israel that has set.—But no ! the sun of Israel has not set—for ever ; true, his light is now veiled, his rays we seek in vain with our agonized vision ; his warmth no more quickens the blood in our veins. Yet the time, nevertheless, will come, when he will shine forth again with redoubled splendour ; when his light will be seven-fold to what it was before its obscuration, when nations will bask in his beams, and foreign climes be quickened into eternal life by his refulgence.—But, alas ! for our sinful people, they delay the time of salvation by their thoughtlessness ; they

care not for the promised redemption; nay, some even hug the chains of their slavery, and say: "We wish not freedom." Can we then wonder, that the anger of God is yet burning? Can we be surprised, that our misfortunes are renewed from time to time, when we trust to the aid of men for emancipation, as we are willing to call it, and accept our birthright as a boon from the hands of our former enemies, and forget that it is God who procures us enlargement? Have we any right to complain of persecution, when we are ever ready to break the laws, as soon as the bonds of servitude are a little loosened—when we are always glad to escape from the burdens of religion, when the chains of the oppressor are rendered somewhat less galling? And add to this ingratitude towards God, the want of love one Jew feels for the other; and see how little unanimity exists even in the small councils of our scattered communities; and observe how apt every one is willing to play the tyrant in his little circle, when he is raised to authority; and the want of obedience, which many display to wholesome regulations, enacted for the government of the congregations: and then answer me, what kind of commonwealth could be formed out of such materials? No, God is just, it is ourselves who retard our happiness; it is we ourselves, who delay the day of salvation. But as there are, thanks be to God, always some in every country, in every town, nay, perhaps in every house, in whose heart there are seated piety, resignation, meekness, and brotherly love, so also will the favourable hour of deliverance arrive, though tardily. And how can we fear of its not coming on account of the delay? Some fearful heart shudders at the idea of eighteen hundred years of exile; but, trembler! what are a thousand years in the eyes of God, but "as the day that passeth, as the watch of a night?" Again we must consider, that our captivity has been of incalculable benefit to mankind. Look around you, a knowledge of our holy law is spreading—in every country some rays of light are penetrating; and to what other cause can this change be attributed, but to the influence of the law, which was given through Moses, and which has become more known, more admired, and more followed by the nations of the earth, since we were captives? Our enemies hated us, but they were enlightened by us, and our wounds

opened to them the fountain of light and happiness.—Am I asserting more than the experience of every one teaches him! Who can be so blinded as not to acknowledge this self-evident truth? Away, then, with that faint-heartedness, which is a greater enemy to our belief, than either the destruction of Jerusalem or the persecution of the dark ages, for whilst our hope is undiminished, whilst our faith in God's salvation remains unbroken: no power on earth is able to injure in the least the existence of our religion. But let once the insidious misgivings of fear, which others are so anxious to instil in us, be listened to with complacency, and it is as certain, as any thing which has not yet come to pass, that our nation is then nigh its dissolution. But is there a Jew who would not exert all his energy, no matter how little soever his acts may be in accordance with the law, to prevent the extinction of our heroic, suffering people? Who would not deplore the injury which the world at large would suffer, if the inheritors of the revelation of the Most High should have ceased to be an evidence of his wisdom and an example to all mankind?—Let us therefore all be united in our regret, and let us never forget that we, as descendants of Israel, have a temple to weep for, and a conquered and oppressed people to bemoan; but whilst thus mourning, let us not waver in our hopes nor despair of God's goodness, even if our career on earth be closed before the promised salvation approaches. We have seen that punishment always followed sin, and that Israel was nevertheless at no time left entirely at the mercy of the foeman. Can any one then doubt, that the other prophecies will be fulfilled as well as those which have already been accomplished? And truly, brethren, we may say, that if ever hope was well founded, if ever confidence ought to visit the human breast, it is the hope which we feel, it is the confidence which animates us; for we are promised by the prophet:

וּפְרוּיֵה' יִשְׁבוּן וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה וּשְׂמֵחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֵאשִׁים  
שִׁשׁוֹן וּשְׂמֵחָה יִשְׁיִגוּ וְנָסוּ יְגוֹן וְאַנְחָה : יִשְׁעֵי לַה' י :

“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with loud songs of praise, and everlasting joy shall crown their heads; gladness and joy they shall obtain, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

Isaiah xxxv. 10.

In these words did God announce the restoration of his people; and thus it will be, that, when the Messiah comes, oppression shall cease, and the tears of the oppressed shall flow no more.

May then the accepted year of the Lord be soon proclaimed, and the day of vengeance for our God be no longer delayed; and may all be comforted, in the salvation of our Holy King, who mourn for Zion. Amen.

Menachem 12th. }  
July 22d. } 5591.

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## DISCOURSE XIX.

### THE NEW YEAR.

TO THEE, O our Father, we raise our feeble voice! To Thee we fly for protection! To Thee, who art enthroned in heaven, we call for salvation! Vouchsafe then, O Thou, Almighty One, to remember thy people on this thy day of judgment, and inscribe them to everlasting life, permanent bliss, and temporal security from evil, when they pass in trial before thy judgment-seat. Amen!

#### BRETHREN!

“Ended is the past year and its curses;” and we have begun a new year, and entered upon a new period in our existence. Many a one, who in the by-gone year was linked to a dear friend, has seen this bond severed by the rude, unsparing hand of death.—Many, who in former days enjoyed the repose of luxury and affluence, now moisten their hard-earned bread with the burning tear of toilsome labour.—Many who before were courted by friends, adored almost by admiring crowds, nay, envied by their distanced enemies, are now solitary and for-

saken, and none so poor, none so miserable, as to render them homage. Again, many who before rioted in the enjoyment of good health, are now fast approaching the termination of their life, and the grave, as it were, is yawning at their feet, eager to enfold within its cold embrace the unwilling trembler standing on its verge. These are but a small portion of the changes, which the past twelve months have witnessed, and thus another revolution of the seasons has taught an awful lesson to the children of the dust, and has admonished them, to beware of clinging too closely to earthly things, since they must so soon be wrested from the powerless grasp of the weak and fading mortal.

“ Begun has the year.” Again, brethren, the grace of God is dawning upon us, who have by his mercy survived, who have again been permitted to dwell for a while longer on earth, who are yet left to be enabled to acquire a treasure in heaven by employing the existence granted to us in deeds of active benevolence and energetic piety.—I said, that the grace of God is dawning upon us ; for indeed, brethren, we are surrounded by light effulgent, by the wisdom of an All-wise Creator, by munificence unbounded, and by care unflagging, and unwearied by continued exertion. And enough of grace has been granted us by God, to render sickness supportable, galling poverty not toilsome, slavery and oppression tolerable, nay death even an easy and an onward path to everlasting happiness.—Some may therefore be led to inquire, “ Whence all the misery which afflicts the world ? whence all the calamities, the horrors, and the violence, which desolate mankind, if God is as good, as we are told He is ?” But reflection will soon answer us, that we ourselves are the cause of the manifold evil which exists ; for we are heedless of the divine light which is beaming upon us ; we refuse to listen to the voice that fain would instruct us in the way of life ; and regardless of the bounty and munificence of God, and unwilling to trust to his providential care, we seek a way of our own, inconsistent with the happiness of ourselves, the welfare of others, and displeasing and abhorrent to our Maker. And thus we draw punishment—the evil—down upon ourselves and others, as a just recompense for our misdeeds ; and crime and chastisement must follow each other, since the

same cause will always produce a similar effect. And from the beginning of the presence of man on earth up to the present day, this has been the uniform course of events, and chastisement has ever followed in the footsteps of transgression; and the Almighty has thus proved to an erring world, that only in his favour there is happiness.—In the beginning peace reigned on earth, when the work of creation was finished, and in harmony all creatures lived with each other, enjoying their existence, as they proceeded perfect from the hand of their Maker. The lion rested in the forest along with the deer, and between the tiger and the calf was peace, and the lamb went unharmed by the wolf. But when Adam, the father of our race, ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, all was changed—and discord followed the path of sin, and it was not long before death lurked behind every shrub—before the winds were loaded with pestilence—before the clouds of heaven scattered destruction, and the floods of the sea carried desolation in the force of their raging billows; beast sought the life of beast, and man gloated over the slaughtered carcass of his brother. The same has also been ever since; through sin alone discord springs up; and where the word of God is disregarded miseries are accumulating, and ever and anon the terrible wrath of the Righteous Avenger is manifested in the judgment which He executes on sinners. But to punish is not the wish of the Merciful Ruler, not to destroy is his pleasure; He will instruct, He will improve, He will show his children the way of life, and by the precepts of his wisdom He endeavours to lead them all into the sanctuary of unending happiness. Now this is the light of which we have spoken, the grace, the munificence, and the care which we enjoy in our fallen state; it is, brethren, the light of the law, the grace and munificence of the divine legislation, and the care of wise commandments, which, if carefully followed, will make us all happy, all worthy children of the God of mercy.—In the law, which has thus been given, there are many commandments of a general nature, for instance, those regarding the intercourse between man and man; others, however, have an especial reference with regard to the relation of the creature to his Maker, and were instituted to impress upon his mind that he has duties to observe to the Author of

his being as well as to his species, and that he is accountable to Him for every act, word, and thought. In this class of duties we may reckon the laws relating to the festivals, and the observances which are to be practised on the same, since all of them, as may be seen by an inspection of the holy law itself, were to serve as mementos of certain miraculous actions of the Deity, and to keep alive within us our entire dependence on his bounty and grace.—With regard to the festival which we are celebrating this day, we read in Numbers xxix. 1 :

ובחדש השביעי באחד לחדש מקרא קדש יהיה לכם  
 כל מלאכת עבודה לא תעשו יום תרועה יהיה לכם :  
 במדבר כט' א' :

“ And on the first day of the seventh month shall be unto you a holy convocation, no kind of work shall ye do; a day of blowing of the cornet it shall be to you.”

You will see from this precept, that we are ordered to sound the cornet, or, as we call it, the shophar, on this day, the first of the civil year, and according to our received opinions, the anniversary of the creation. It now may, perhaps, strike you as something singular, that the beginning of the year should be celebrated by the sound of the cornet, an instrument used frequently in ancient times to call the troops to war, to sound an alarm, or at other occasions of solemnity and danger; and you very likely will ask yourselves, what can be the meaning of this ceremony on this particular day?—To illustrate this commandment let us revert to the organization of our people, and to the country whence our ancestors went forth.—We are, as it is well known, descended from Abraham the Hebrew, and the country of our first organization is Asia; it was therefore so ordained by our Divine Legislator, our God and Father, to introduce such symbols and emblems into the frame-work of the law, as were familiar to those who first received it; and we have therefore in the imagery of our holy Writings, and in some of our ceremonies, very frequent allusions and reference both to our descent and our first habitation.—The history of Abraham, although so familiar, presents, nevertheless, many



very striking points for reflection, from which particularly we, his descendants, can draw useful and wise lessons; and as the sacrifice of Isaac has an especial reference to the subject under consideration, permit me to draw your attention to it, as best fitted for to-day's reflection.—Abraham had seen the glory of his name spread among the children of the East; his riches had increased to an immense extent, and his wife Sarah had been blessed with the birth of the long-expected child; and it may be said, that in this way the whole chain of promises made to the patriarch were in a train of fulfilment. For, prosperity had been promised, and he was prosperous; greatness of name was his, as God had foretold; the child which Sarah was to bear had also been given; and Abraham was thus established as the favourite of Heaven. The fair fame which he enjoyed had also confessedly not been lightly earned; for his love of the Creator had been repeatedly tested, and amidst all these trials he had not wavered, nay, his confidence had increased with every probation, and the dispensations of Heaven, and the persecution of men, had never caused him to relax in his well-founded faith. But to crown all the sacrifices to principle and love to God hitherto made, the last and severest was now demanded of him, to prove that the man destined to be the father of a multitude of nations, and of a people to be the depository of God's holy covenant, could offer up every thing to the Lord of heaven, even the dearest hope of his heart, and to comply with a mandate which, to appearance, threatened the extinction of the most cheering promise ever made to him, that "in Isaac his seed should be called." For the command had gone forth, that he should take Isaac, the only son, the beloved, the offspring of Sarah, and sacrifice him on one of the mountains of the land of Moriah. Had Isaac now been actually sacrificed, the promise just mentioned would have been broken; and yet, did Abraham object to this seemingly capricious order? No, on the contrary, he obeyed cheerfully; and armed with his usual confidence in the unwavering truth of God, he thought, that it was unbecoming in him who had received so many bounties at the hand of his Master to inquire after his unsearchable ways, and he set forth on his perilous journey with the intended victim, resolved to fulfil the will of Heaven.

The sacred spot is reached, and behold them, the father ready to sacrifice his last hope, and the son willing to become a burnt-offering on the altar of his Creator! See on yonder eminence the altar is built; the gray-headed patriarch arranges the wood; he binds the yielding one; and now behold the bright knife flashing over the head of the victim, and the sacrifice is almost fulfilled:—when lo! the outstretched hand is arrested by the messenger of Mercy, for not the sacrifice it was that God desired, but the readiness only to obey, and here indeed had been exhibited an example of ready obedience, which the ministring angels could not have surpassed; and the intended sacrifice was stayed, and the blessing of God was poured out over both, and over their descendants after them. In the history of this occurrence, we read, that a ram was sacrificed in the place of Isaac; this then will give us an explanation of the verse of Leviticus xxiii. 25: “On the first day of the seventh month shall be to you a day of rest, of blowing of the cornet in remembrance;” in remembrance namely, of the sacrifice on Moriah of a ram instead of the devoted servant of God. And it is meet that at every new period in our existence especially the recollection of this memorable event should awaken in our hearts the noblest sentiments of devotion. We should reflect, that if Abraham was ready to devote his all, the only son of his long-loved Sarah, born to him at the age of a hundred years, simply because he thought his God desired it: we also should resolve to follow his example as far as lies within our power, and to make daily those small sacrifices to principle, which are demanded of us in the service of Heaven. Abraham, as we have seen, was ready to yield the dearest possession, that which without a miracle could never have been restored; how much more ought we to hasten to submit to any inconvenience in the discharge of our duties, and to abstain from pleasures and pursuits, if they should militate in the least against our religious obligations.—Again, we have the exhilarating certainty, exemplified in the history of our people, that God blesses the child for the virtue of the parent; what father, then, and what mother, would not endeavour, if they really love their offspring, to secure them a legacy, which all the ills of the world cannot dissipate; a treasure, which can never perish? Let us, there-

fore, every year recal to mind, the noble devotedness of the patriarchs, and resolve to follow them in their virtue and implicit confidence in God; and let us imagine that the spirits of the departed great ones whisper encouragingly in our ears, when the loud voice of the shophar resounds in all our dwellings!

Says the prophet (Amos iii. 6.): "Should the cornet be blown in a city and the people not tremble?"—Brethren! the shophar is not alone to remind you of what your ancestors did and suffered; but it speaks also to you as the warning voice of God, and as it were, reminds you that there is danger at hand, that destruction is hovering near, and it bids you to beware, whilst there is yet time to flee into the safe enclosure, before yet the enemy's power entirely overwhelms you.—Our life may be aptly compared to a road on which a stranger ventures in a foreign land. Onward he presses, eager to reach his journey's end, and heedless, because unconscious, of dangers which still may beset him on all sides. Imagine him now on the brink of a precipice in a stormy and tempestuous night, when no light is shed to guide his wavering feet. Already one foot is raised above the pit, and the next step, the next instant, would hurry him into eternity—when lo! the sound of a signal-horn reaches his ear! He is startled, he halts, and a bright flash of lightning reveals to him the giddy height from which he had nearly fallen, and he blesses the sound which warned him of the unseen danger, that has almost deprived him of life.—Again, behold this traveller toiling up the mountain-side, when bleak winter holds dominion over the frozen earth; no path is visible in the trackless snow, and he is yet far distant from the solitary hut on the cloudcapt summit, the hospitable shelter of which he is seeking. Bewildered and despairing he sinks down exhausted and fatigued, and he resigns himself to death, lamenting his hopeless lot, and turning his thoughts to his beloved and distant home. But hark! the Alpine horn animates his drooping spirits, and the consciousness, that aid is near, inspires him with new strength—he toils again—and his exertions, renewed by hope, extricate him from the folds of earth's wintry winding-sheet, and at the friendly hearth of the mountain-hermit, he blesses the horn that bid him hope.—Returned to his paternal roof, the cause of his country calls him to the embattled plain;

but amidst the shock of contending hosts, the weary, wounded, warrior is struck down on the field of death: around him are the slain of the friend and of the foe, and he faints, unconscious, from the loss of blood; night closes around him, and the cooling winds call him again into life and consciousness; yet he dares not to move for fear of falling a prisoner in the hands of the enemy; but suddenly the bugle-horn of his fellow-warriors, summoning all the stragglers to their country's standard, teaches him that friends are approaching; he raises a faint shout, exerts the last remains of his strength, and is speedily welcomed in the secure quarters of his conquering countrymen!

This, brethren, is the voice of the shophar!—We enter upon life, imagining that we are safe, we fear not, that we shall be brought to the brink of impiety by the even path which the ways of the world open to us. But wo to our heedlessness! step by step we are brought nearer and nearer to irretrievable ruin, and we are preparing to throw ourselves into the embrace of vice: when, our course is arrested by the warning voice of God, by a slight demonstration of his disapproval, and being thus made acquainted with our folly, we commence the study of his law, and gradually we are again brought to return to the precepts we have so long forsaken; and when we are once more restored to the love of God, we bless the chastening rod which taught us to feel the error and unworthiness of our worldly conduct.

Amid the cares of life and its afflictions we become bewildered, and our spirit sinks within us, because of all the misfortunes that befall us. We are alone and solitary, there is no friend to relieve our wants, no one to speak comfort to our desponding souls, and we are almost ready to curse the day that first opened to us an existence so full of afflicting sorrows and agonizing trials. But of a sudden the word of consolation is breathed into our ears, we are extricated from our troubles; and led on by the cheering sound of comfort, so richly scattered through the pages of the heavenly law, we forget our past miseries and the trials which are now ended; and renewing our almost suspended exertions in the field of virtue, we toil on through the period of our allotment on earth, till at length we are received in the mansion of our Father, where we shall be

guarded as no miser guards his gold, where we shall be watched as no mother watches her tender nurseling.

Hurried away by temptations which we are not able, because not willing, to withstand, we sink almost, as though we were wearied with the struggle, into the arms of vice. We yield our energies to the destroyer; we fancy, that we have laboured enough, we imagine that we have done all which can be expected from men; and we are content to lie down amidst those already destroyed by passion, and those, who are ready to follow on the same path of ruin. Already the night of mental darkness is closing around us, already sin is rejoicing to enrol us among her votaries: when the aroused knowledge of our unworthiness awakens the lethargic sluggards, and we gather the remaining small portion of virtue around us—we struggle violently—we disregard the wounds which sin has struck—and we drag ourselves, slowly—slowly—but ever onward, till we are again received amidst the friends of God, and reassured by the example of our brethren, we are rendered equally sincere, though but late, members of the noble fraternity, whose aim is the service of God and the well-being of their fellow-men.—If then, brethren, you hear the sound of the cornet, let it appear to you as the warning voice which speaks to you symbolically from Heaven, to rouse you from moral lethargy, to reanimate you when you are sinking under affliction, and to warn you when you are carelessly exposing yourselves to the temptations of life!

Says the Psalmist: “God ascends midst the shouting, the Lord amidst the voice of the cornet. Sing ye to God, sing ye, sing to our King, sing ye. For God is King over all the earth, commence the song of instruction.” (Psalm xlvii.) To-day is the anniversary of creation; this is the day, on which we annually celebrate the generation of the universe. It is the day on which Adam first came into being, and when, rejoiced at his existence, he first acknowledged his Maker. Sound then the cornet! for God is king. Blow the trumpet! for the Eternal ruleth. Commence the shout of thanksgiving! for the Merciful One reigneth! Yes, let us at the return of every year, again and again acknowledge the supreme rule of our Father, in the manner He commanded, and let the first day in

every new period be celebrated as a festival in honour of the Lord's enthronement!—When then the shophar is blown in all our dwellings, let us recollect the sacrifice which Abraham was willing to make in obedience to the voice of his Creator! Let this recollection attune our hearts to God's service; and let this feeling, teaching us to tear our thoughts away from the sinful allurements of earthly life, prepare each of us to acknowledge and to serve sincerely the Father of his people, as the sole King of the world, the Ruler of our destinies, and the only Haven of our hope!

“Begun has the year and its blessings!” May the Supreme Disposer of all events grant us a happy year, and ensure us freedom of body, disenthralment of mind, personal security, and national welfare. May the bondmen be freed, and may to the captives of Zion the trumpet of salvation sound, and the great shophar recal those who are lost in the land of Assyria, and are dispersed in the land of Egypt; and may we all, that hope for salvation, be speedily assembled to worship on the holy mountain at Jerusalem, in the temple which shall be raised above all the hills, as the dwelling of the King of glory! Amen, Selah.

Elul 28th. }  
 Sept. 6th. } 5591.

## DISCOURSE XX.

## THE PASSOVER.

O OUR FATHER we call upon thee! O be gracious to thy people, and be merciful to the children of thy servants, and lead them by gentle means to the haven of thy blessing, and let them see, that in kindness it was, Thou didst punish them; that in paternal love Thou didst let them feel the burning of thy anger, in order that they might thereby be made more worthy of the inheritance Thou didst promise them in this world and in the world to come! Amen.

## BRETHREN!

It is to-day the feast of unleavened bread, it is the Passover of the Lord!—But why the festivities of the day? why the eating of the unleavened bread? why the holy convocation?—To this we may answer in the language of the law: “Because the Lord led us out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage!” Yes, brethren, it was in those days, when a barbarous Pharaoh ruled over all the land of Egypt, that the Israelites, our ancestors, were held in cruel bondage, compelled to work as slaves in the fields, in public buildings, and all kinds of heavy labour, and scourged by the lash of merciless task-masters. It had been so pre-ordained by the will of Him, who spoke, and the world came into being, that the descendants of Abraham should be strangers four hundred years, in a land not theirs, and be compelled there to submit to labour and injury; but that on the other hand the promised blessings and their entire freedom were not to be withheld as soon as the appointed time had arrived.—But in the mean while the suffering of Israel was grievous in the extreme, for the tyrant, abusing the power granted him by the prophecy of God, even slaughtered the new-born children, in order to diminish the numbers of the detested people, or perhaps altogether to exterminate them from

the face of the earth. And he thought, that his will could be accomplished, that the Protector of Israel would look with apathy upon the bodies of innocent babes floating down the stream of the Nile, would not watch them as they were swallowed up by the remorseless waves! Vain thought! he had not yet been taught the futility of man's warring with the Almighty. His arms had been prosperous; wherever he turned his eye for conquest, success had followed his path; and should he listen to the prayer of the abject slave—listen to the entreaty of a powerless and detested subject? No, not Mizraim's king would lower his royal dignity thus; and he thought himself secure in his palace of splendour, by the side of his river-god, in the midst of his numerous guards, and amongst the masses of his false priests and soothsayers.—But lo! the time of the end had arrived; and even in this very palace, even surrounded by these priests and wise soothsayers, was educated the man, was nurtured the prophet, who was destined to free the oppressed, under the guidance of Heaven, and who, armed with the instruments of vengeance of the God of righteousness, was to humble the oppressor, and to make him feel, that the Great King of Israel “rules in the midst of the earth.” As said already, Pharaoh had ordered his people to throw every new-born male child of the Hebrews into the river; but although his satellites carefully obeyed the ruthless decree, the wife of Amram nevertheless succeeded in hiding her infant for a space of three months from the searching eye of the king's executioners. Three months she had thus spent in unceasing care and watching, when she discovered to her sorrow, that her home was no longer a place of safety for her innocent and tender offspring. Picture to yourselves the mother's grief, when she was made conscious of the great, the apparently inevitable danger; whither should she fly? to whom should she look for protection? Her own people, nay, the chosen husband of her love, were unable to assist her, for all were alike suffering in bondage. And should she go to the king to crave his indulgence and pity? but he spurned the helpless petitioners, and refused to listen to their entreaty; nay, he increased the burden of their labours, when they prayed for an alleviation of their task.—But the virtuous are never



forsaken, and the righteous are never left without a protector; and the mother of Moses fully verified this consoling truth by her example.—Rather than beg in vain of hearts which felt not for the distresses of others, she resolved to consign the precious charge to the hands of the Being who had confided him to her. She accordingly made a box of bull-rushes, and having made it water-tight, she put her child therein, and placed it among the rushes on the shore of the Nile; convinced, that He, who feedeth “the children of the raven when they cry,” could, if it pleased his wisdom, protect and rescue the helpless infant from his perilous situation. And soon it was proved that she had hoped well; for the king’s daughter coming to bathe, espied the box among the reeds, and opening it she discovered the child; and penetrated with pity for the forlorn babe, proscribed from his very birth, she resolved to rescue him from death.—In short, she adopted the child, and called him Mosheh, in commemoration of her having drawn\* him from the water; and in the palace of the oppressor of his people the future messenger of Heaven passed the years of his infancy and early manhood.—Thus much for the early years of the chosen lawgiver; and does it not strike you, that his miraculous escape from a watery grave, must have early impressed a mind like his with the conviction, that there is a great and watchful Being ever regardful of whatever is done on earth? that his own case must have taught him, that the little no less than the great, the humble and lowly no less than the proud and lofty are continually under the direction of an All-wise Supreme? And in truth, we should think, that he was so impressed, for we see in his early history, that he opposed himself to the cause of oppression, although he had every thing to hope from it, and nothing could be gained by favouring the suffering Israelites.—At length the time arrived, when the fugitive Moses was to effect single-handed, but armed with superior power, the deliverance of his fellow-sufferers. He was feeding the flock of his wife’s father in the wilderness, when the word of God was imparted to him: “Go, and I will send thee to Pharaoh,

\* The word מִשְׁחָה (*mahsho*) signifies to draw from the water, whence the name of Moses, or the one rescued from the water.

and thou shalt bring out my people of Israel out of Egypt." It was at the end of the period, which had been set as the limit of the sufferings of our ancestors, that Moses was commissioned to lead them forth to the service of the Lord. He was, therefore, told to go to the king and tell him, that the Eternal Lord of heaven and earth had appeared to him, and had ordered him to demand the dismissal of his first-born son, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.—Moses went, and spoke the words of the Lord before a despot, who had made unto himself a god, who worshipped the water which he drank, the ox who ploughed his field, and the crocodile whose jaws destroyed many of his people. To him Moses spoke as God had told him; but Pharaoh too confiding in his power, too much corrupted by the flattery of his courtiers, and too much emboldened by the submissiveness of his abject subjects, said contemptuously: "Who is the Eternal, whose voice I shall obey to let Israel go? I know not the Eternal, and Israel too I will not dismiss."—But soon even he was convinced, that it is useless to avoid the power of the Supreme. Signs and wonders were performed in his presence; a staff thrown from the hands of Aaron became a serpent; the water of the holy river of the Egyptians was changed into blood; the clear stream produced frogs innumerable; anon the dust was changed into noxious insects; then wild beasts in immense masses devoured every thing before them; a pestilence smote all the cattle exposed in the fields; the bodies of all, of the priests even, were covered with blanes and ulcers; hail cut down every thing exposed abroad; again locusts devoured the green grass and the young grain, even the leaves of the trees, and whatever else the hail had spared: and, lastly, an impenetrable gloom, a total darkness, had shrowded the fair land of the sun for three days; and yet Pharaoh relented not. Once, indeed, he acknowledged: "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are sinners;" but no sooner had the plague vanished, than Pharaoh was like himself again; he forgot the chastisement, hardened his heart, the flattery of his courtiers again induced him to look upon himself as the favoured son of his gods, and in consequence, he repeated his obduracy and sinned again. Here, let me observe to you, brethren, that Pharaoh is not the only obdurate sinner, who

disregards the awful admonitions of Heaven. Even we, ourselves, are very often no better than the tyrant, whose deeds we all denounce as cruel and oppressive, and whom we all adjudge to have been rightly punished. Look, I pray you, at some passages of your life, none of us is perfect, for we all have sinned, we all have transgressed against the laws of God, and reflect, how it occasionally happened, that some unexpected check was given to your course; how you at first were somewhat startled at the singularity of God's judgment against you; but how you afterwards suffered the impression to wear off, which the solemn and well-intended warning had at first produced. It is even so; our pride from time to time whispers into our ear. "Be not afraid, thy conduct was justifiable, it was the same which any other man in thy situation would have pursued;" and in surety, we are led astray, or rather we *suffer* ourselves very willingly to be blindfolded, and consequently having explained every circumstance of the strange occurrence to our satisfaction, we sin anew, and heap wilful transgression upon our former trespasses.—The same was the case with the king of Egypt. He had all along conceived that his conduct towards the Israelites was just and right, for, thought he: "Shall my slaves, those I have received as such from my predecessor, go free, without ransom? they now build my towns, they now labour for me in the field, they now dig my canals; and whence shall I obtain compensation for their loss? No, Israel shall not go free!" And as each plague had passed away, and as soon as the punishment was removed, he attributed it to accident, to some chance, which he to be sure could not account for, but which he yet did not believe to be a manifestation of the power of the Deity, a Deity too, whom neither he nor his ancestors acknowledged.—His servants also lent their aid to inspire him with resistance. They had been accustomed to obey him implicitly, to hear with them was to obey; they, therefore, did not, durst not, advise him to yield, and they even applauded his acts, as we are told in Scriptures, "and Pharaoh hardened his heart, he himself as well as his servants;" and then, it must be considered, that the Egyptians themselves were individually benefitted by the labours of the Israelites, as well as the state.—Thus, then, Pharaoh resisted

the ten times repeated warning and miraculous manifestation ; but now the time had arrived, when longer disobedience was rendered impossible, when by the most signal calamity that ever befel any land the king of Mitzraim was to be taught, that it behoves mortals to bow before the throne of the King of kings, the Holy One praised be He.—Moses, in the last interview he had with Pharaoh in his palace, spoke : “ Thus speaketh the Eternal Lord : at the hour of midnight, I will walk abroad in the midst of Egypt ; when every first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh, who is to sit on his throne, to the first-born of the slave, who sits behind the mill, and every first-born of cattle.” These are the words of the terrible denunciation ; Pharaoh might have averted the blow, which was to reach him no less than the meanest of his people, by a timely compliance with the righteous demand ; but he would not listen, and so the vengeance of the Lord took its course. At the dead hour of midnight it was ; it was in the night of the fifteenth of the first month ; it was whilst the Israelites were celebrating their first festival of redemption ; it was whilst the Egyptians rested as they thought secure in their beds : that the destroyer walked forth in the land. It was as though a blighting dew had fallen in every house, so instantaneous was the destruction ; in every palace, in every house, in every hovel, in every prison there was death, the young dropped down in the midst perhaps of the nightly revel, and the aged lay, as it were, strangled on their couches.—And the king—he beheld his eldest son expiring at his feet, the son who, as he had hoped, would have succeeded to his kingdom, even he was cut off ; nay, the cattle, which the Egyptians worshipped, perished, and the images, which they had set up for contemplation, for auguries or worship, were hurled from their stands, and they crumbled into dust before the mighty Hand that was outstretched in that night.—In every house there was now wailing and lamentation, every one thought his time of death would come next ; the whole land was filled with mourning, the like of which had never before been known in Egypt, and the impulse to get rid at all hazards of the dangerous slaves, on whose account the land had well nigh been ruined, became irresistible ; and the obdurate king

himself hastened to seek out Moses, to bid him leave Egypt instantly, together with the people of Israel.—Thus was the liberty of our people obtained ; and in addition the Egyptians loaded them with presents, every thing seemed to be left to the choice of the Israelites, who then went out, even before their doughs, which they had prepared, could become leavened, and they baked them into unleavened cakes on the road.—This is a brief view of the long captivity, degrading servitude of our ancestors, and of obstinate resistance and ultimate forced concessions on the part of the king and the people of Egypt. And in commemoration of these events, and to perpetuate the memory of the hurry in which we went out, so that the bread had to be baked without its being suffered to become leavened, we were commanded (Deut. xvi. 1–3):

שמור את חדר האביב ועשית פסח לה' אלהיך כי  
 בחדש האביב הוציאתך ה' אלהיך ממצרים לילה : שבעת  
 ימים תאכל עליו מצות לחם עני כי בחפזון יצאת מארץ  
 מצרים למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי  
 חיך : דבר' טו' א'–ג' :

“Observe the month of Abib, that thou makest then the Passover in honour of the Lord thy God, for in the month of Abib, did the Lord thy God bring thee out of the land of Egypt at night.” And again: “Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, the bread of poverty, for in haste thou didst go out of Egypt, for the sake that thou mayest remember the day of thy going out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life.”

This, brethren, then, is the reason of our being here this day, and this is the cause of our abstaining from every thing which is leavened during the Passover. If the stranger now, and our children, who are as yet unacquainted with the wonderful deeds of the Lord, which he wrought for us in olden times, ask: “Why is this service?” we may answer, it is to remind us of the abundant mercies of which we all participated, for if it had not pleased the Almighty (to adopt the language of our service) to redeem our ancestors from Egypt, then we and our children, and our children’s children would even to this day have been slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. And an event like this

is surely deserving of the most solemn commemoration. Look upon the state of the world at the time of the Exodus. Idolatry rested like an incubus upon all mankind; the faculties of reasonable beings were blunted by gross superstition; and had God not raised up to himself a people, and gifted them with better statutes and more sublime conceptions of himself, what, I ask, must have been the condition of the children of Adam? It is futile to assert, that the progressive development of reason would have effected a reformation, when we plainly see, that the enlightenment of man had gradually deteriorated, until he had become, as said already, the benighted idolater. Suppose now, this state had continued to this period of time, to this age, which we are so apt to call enlightened: is it to be believed, that human reason could have progressed, unless an event similar to the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites had taken place? And in truth, this event was in itself sufficient to regenerate the world. First, it was the dawning of freedom for every member of the human family, since it is the first on record of the unjust power of tyranny broken; and, secondly, it was the commencement of a new era in the disenfranchisement of the mind, since it was then that the light was first kindled, which has burned ever since with untarnished lustre, and which must ultimately beam with redoubled splendour upon every soul; which must at last bring every existing reasoning being within the fold of our God's pasturage, and make all nations only as so many members of the same family, united by one common tie of unity of interest and uniformity of worship.—This is the event we celebrate, a two-fold deliverance, of mind and body, not alone for ourselves, but also for all who like us derive their parentage from the founder of the human race.—Let us then reflect seriously upon the cause of this festival, and let us in truth, according to the dictates of the law, remember the day of our going out of Egypt all the days of our life, since it was not merely the humbling of Pharaoh, but also the regeneration of the whole world which was effected thereby.—In return for this great favour we can render the Almighty nothing but a virtuous conduct; for to Him all the acts of man can be of no further importance, (since they cannot affect his beatitude,) than as they promote their

own happiness. He wills our happiness only; our deeds can neither hurt nor benefit Him, as He is entirely removed from the influence of every created being, He who is the Author of all that exists.—Let, therefore, the recurrence of the Passover animate us to a renewal of our attachment to our God's holy precepts; let us all join our hearts, our hands, our simultaneous efforts, to prove to all, that we Israelites are not ungrateful for all the goodness we have received, and are even yet receiving, although no longer united under one paternal government. Let us forget all trifling differences, let every man forgive the sins committed against him by his neighbour; but let the proud oppressor of the poor, and the hard-hearted avaricious man, who both look upon the distresses of their fellow-beings with indifference; let them, I say, reflect, that retribution will come, when they will find, that neither power nor wealth will shield them against God's almighty power; for He who punished Pharaoh, and the guilty Egyptians, can even now smite the sinner, no matter how deeply he may lie concealed, no matter how much he may have fortified himself by silencing his conscience, no matter how long the trespass is past, and he vainly dreams his acts lie buried in oblivion.—In fine, the admonition so often repeated in the Pentateuch: “Remember, that thou hast been a slave in Egypt,” should remind us of the debt of gratitude we owe to God, and thus reminding us, should induce us also to love Him who has been so gracious; so that we may be rendered good and pious, and worthy of bliss in this life, and of happiness hereafter.

May the grace of the Lord always surround us. Amen!

Nissan 13th. }  
 April 13th. } 5592.

## DISCOURSE XXI.

## THE PENTECOST.

To the God of Israel, who so often has displayed his glory and goodness upon his children, be praise and glory for ever-lasting. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

In my late address on the occasion of the Passover I adverted briefly to the wonders which the Almighty displayed in Egypt, and to the miracles and fearful deeds by which He brought about the enlargement of our ancestors from cruel bondage. This was indeed an act of grace, for which our everlasting thanks should ever be cheerfully rendered to Him who proved himself so good to the afflicted; who listened to us when nothing attainable through human energy was able to assist us, and who broke the bonds which centuries of oppression, aided by the ingenious devices which cunning and cruelty had invented, had well nigh rendered irresistible.—But with all these wonderful acts the deliverance was yet left incomplete. The Israelites, as they came from Egypt, were tainted with all the vices and superstitions of their late task-masters, so at least we should judge from the tenor of the Bible-history; and they were therefore unfit to be called the people of God, since nothing distinguished them from the nations of the earth, save their descent from the patriarchs, the original worshippers of the Lord of heaven. As thus they needed a reformation to make them fit subjects for God's empire, it pleased Him, their Father and the Father of all the world, to come and instruct them himself, for the purpose that they might know what was pleasing to Him, and that by acting according to their newly acquired knowledge, they might live as becomes the children of God.—The Lord himself came to instruct the Israelites! How sublime the meekness of the Creator must appear to us! The children of his adorers, "his friends," as his record styles them, are in trouble, and He saves them! They are sunk in



ignorance, undeserving of grace, and He instructs and improves them, and becomes, in this manner, their Creator in a two-fold sense of the word ! He himself, although raised beyond the reach of our most elevated conceptions, greater far than the most daring flight of fancy can paint him ;—He, I say, condescended to instruct in love the children of the dust, whose life is like the fleeting shadow ; whose deeds are to Him, as though they had not been ; and whose existence is derived from Him ! Aye, even as a father teaches his son, as openly as the mother speaketh to her daughter, spoke the Everlasting One ; and thus showed us how in Him, the Most Perfect, meekness is allied with sublimity ; how in our God condescension is inseparably interwoven with unlimited greatness ! Yet if we come to consider how truly great He is, how every thing existing is existing in Him ; how He is contained in nothing, but all is contained in Him : we shall cease to wonder, and not deem the descent on Sinai, which we celebrate this day, as an act unworthy of the dignity of the Deity. He is the source of all wisdom, and the intelligence of the greatest sage is intelligence derived from Him : why should we then be astonished, that, to effect a great good, He should think it consonant with his dignity to descend in all his glory, and teach the children of those, who had been appointed by Him as the parents of a great nation and the blessing of all mankind, the laws which his wisdom had instituted as the everlasting, unwavering, and immaculate landmarks of the path of righteousness.—If, then, our opponents sneeringly ask us, if we can be serious in believing in a direct revelation of an especial code of laws, we will answer them : the God who created man, gifted him with a body, so far superior to that of any other animal ; who caused him to walk erect, that he with uplifted eyes might contemplate the expansion of yon firmament, glittering by day with the brilliant light of the sun, and by night illumined by the silvery moon, and the myriads of sparkling stars, the suns of other systems ; and who, to sum up all, has bestowed on him an intelligent mind, a living soul, and a thinking spirit, the like of which nothing earthly does possess : can He not, if so He wills, speak audibly to the ear, and through it to the mind, those things which He may believe to be of general and permanent benefit ? His ability

then cannot be denied, and that He has actually done so is clearly proved, by the fact, that the ten commandments, promulgated to an astonished world for the first time on this day, in the year of the world, according to our computation, 2448, are yet in existence, are yet known, read and acknowledged; and no code, which ever was devised, without acknowledging them as the basis of right, has been upheld either in theory or in practice.—Look to the laws of Babylon, their memory is forgotten; inquire for the statutes of Greece and Rome, and they are no more obeyed; for all were the work of men, bent only upon their own aggrandizement; whereas our laws, founded upon the wisdom of God, are as new this day, as dear to the heart of the lover of his species, as much the established code of our nation, as on that day when our adoring ancestors stood at the foot of Sinai!—Another evidence of the divine origin of the Decalogue can be found therein, that they have never been improved upon since they were first given; what but divine Wisdom could be so perfect, what but not being derived from human experience, can render any thing free from the taint of human work—imperfection.—But let me stop here; to pronounce a eulogium upon the wisdom of God would ill become a fallible, ignorant mortal; for none but God himself can know the extent of good which has been and ever must be derived from the laws, which He himself made known!—Therefore, let our silence be praise; let our inability to express our admiration be the evidence of the depth of our feelings, since we can never say enough, even though the most eloquent were for ever to expatiate upon the theme, and exhaust the richest stores of language. Yet the heart must clothe itself in words, or else all communication of ideas between man and man would become impossible; so then, whatever we express of feeling and of gratitude should always be taken as the tribute of the heart of the thinking to animate through example and precept those who surround him to an equal or superior share of piety and veneration to God; and to induce them, by an exposition of the excellencies of the holy Torah, to follow the precepts therein contained.—Having premised these views, let us proceed to the consideration of the following verse from the portion we read to-day :

ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקלי ושמרתם את בריתי  
 והייתם לי סגלה מכל העמים כי לי כל הארץ : ואתם  
 תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש אלה הדברים אשר  
 תדבר אל בני ישראל : שמות יט' ה'-ו' :

“ And now, if you will hearken to my voice and observe my covenant, you shall be to me the most beloved of all nations; for all the earth is mine; and you shall then be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words thou shalt speak to the children of Israel.” Exodus xix. 5-6.

The Almighty had visited our parents in Egypt, and had seen them oppressed by slavery, and sunk in ignorance and idolatry. They were the descendants of Abraham, to whom God had promised, that as soon as the servitude to which his children had been destined, should have continued till the end of the limited period, they should be redeemed. In consequence of this promise, the oppressors of the Israelites were by degrees brought to relent of their cruelty, and at length to dismiss them, loaded with riches; and thus, as it were, the Almighty had bought them for his servants, since through his powerful intervention their deliverance from thralldom had been effected. It was then that they went forth into the wilderness of Arabia, guided through trackless desolation by the protection of God, under guidance of his chosen servant. The Egyptians soon repented of their having dismissed the Israelites and pursued them to the shores of the Red Sea; and here again the arm of God interposed; he caused the children of Jacob to pass through the divided waters, and sunk the pursuing host of Pharaoh amidst the returning billows. At length the redeemed arrived at the foot of Sinai, in the third month of their redemption, and halted there by the command of God. This was the spot of their present destination, for it was here the Israelites were to worship the Eternal Father, upon their going out of Egypt, as Moses had been promised. All, indeed, conspired to render the present moment and the present spot the best adapted to impress feelings of awe and veneration upon their minds. For as to the time, it was immediately upon the many miraculous benefits heaped upon them, which to deserve they could have done nothing; and to do aught in return for them

must have appeared to them even, uninstructed as they were, impossible and inconceivable, as they must have early enough discovered, that the Being, who had wrought so many things in their favour, was One, to repay whom with *benefits* was impossible. And as to the spot, it was then, and is now as travellers tell, a beautiful mountain, with various peaks, one rising above the other, its sides covered with verdure in the midst of a frightful and barren desert ; and in a country where there is no water to refresh the thirsty traveller stands Mount Horeb, blessed with a cooling spring. It appears as though it were a temple consecrated to the God of benevolence, reared with his own hands, blessed by his spirit, and enriched by his bounty, to receive the wearied and despairing wanderer, who has almost yielded all hope of being saved from the perils of his pathless journey. So then the time of the promulgation of the law was the period when the Israelites had been practically taught, that the All-ruling One is capable to convert the greatest calamity into blessings : who could raise the humblest to a proud eminence ; who could punish the obdurate sinner with punishment beyond the regular course of nature, and who watches over all, the great and the humble, the rich and the poor, with the same paternal solicitude. This moment, we should judge, must have found the whole congregation in a temper of mind to inspire them with gratitude to their heavenly Benefactor ; and their feelings must have induced them to prove their gratitude by their conduct. Behold them, then, encamped at the foot of the beautiful Mount Sinai, at that green island amidst an ocean of sand ; behold Moses, who had hitherto been with the people, called by a voice of an unseen speaker to come up the mount, and imagine the feelings of all his followers at seeing him obey the mysterious call. Anon he appears to listen in breathless attention to an unseen mouth and an unheard voice, and at length he descends again to the camp. The Israelites had been told, that on this spot they should serve God the Lord ; his service had hitherto been entirely unknown to them, and they knew not, if the frightful worship of the heathen idols, where human sacrifices bled on the altar, where the yet trembling heart of the immolated victim is drawn from the living bosom, where the innocent nurseling is laid upon the

heated arms of Moloch's image ; they knew not, I say, if the service of the Lord might not require the same horrors, unused as they were to any other worship.—But no, Moses came not with a message of abominations, he spoke not the words of a wrathful but of a beneficent Being ; and thus he spoke in the name of Him who had sent him :

“ You have seen what I have done to Egypt, and how I have borne you upon eagles' wings, and brought you to me ; and now, if you will hearken to my voice, and observe my covenant, you shall be to me the most beloved of all nations ; for all the earth is mine ; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

In this first announcement was distinctly contained the whole subject of the intercourse, if I may use the terms, between God and the Israelites. He first states how He had been their benefactor, and how great the redemption had been, which He had vouchsafed to bestow on them. Next how He had protected them, as the eagle covers with her body her young brood, from the sword of the Egyptian pursuers and the Amalakite army ; how He had provided them with bread in a land where there is no sowing, and how He had caused the water to flow from the hard rock to quench their thirst. And for what had all this great goodness been bestowed ? to aggrandize God's power ? No ; his power is unlimited, and can therefore not be made greater. What then was the object of all this ? Solely to introduce amongst mankind a purer worship than the modes of various species of idolatry then prevalent, and to re-establish on a firmer, and never to be shaken, footing, the covenant which He had made with Abraham !—“ I have borne you upon eagles' wings, and brought you to me,” says God ; “ I have done all this for your own benefit, from no motives of enlarging my kingdom, for all the earth is mine ; wherever I turn my view every thing stands ready to my will ; the angels of purity, to whom no carnal desire is known, are my servants ; the sun in his course must obey my mandate ; the moon in her orbit is ready to stop in her career at my bidding ; do I speak, the waters of the vasty ocean divide and show their deepest chasm ; and do I but will, the devouring pestilence strides abroad, and slays the children of men ; and at my nod all nature will return

to a chaotic state, and life and death, spirit and matter, and fire and water, become mixed up in one wide mass of confusion and desolation. But all I desire is to bring you to me, meaning: It is my will to rear you up as a people to my service. You I have selected. Long you sighed in hopeless servitude; where were the gods of Egypt, whom you used to regard with veneration? And when I at length stood forth to relieve you; where was again the power of Egypt's idols to stay *my power*? Thus have I endeavoured to impress on your minds my greatness and my glory, and thus prepared, you are of all nations the one best calculated to receive my law, and to become as it were members in a covenant with me." In this manner were the Israelites to repay the many blessings showered upon them, they were in this address of God called on to adopt his kingdom, they should henceforward obey Him as their chief ruler; He would be their Legislator, their King, and Protector, and they should only obey the laws which He would prescribe.—Thus also says the message: "You shall be a kingdom of priests;" meaning, every person of the congregation by obedience to God's will would render himself as a priest, administering before the sanctuary of the Lord. In the outward worship, in the service of the temple and Synagogue, not every one can be a minister, for not every one can by previous education be qualified, nor if the whole body of mankind were so qualified could they all simultaneously act as ministers. But in the worship of the heart, in adoration of the Supreme, in obedience to the law, in charity and benevolence, in purity of soul, and in a devout spirit, all can join, simultaneously and perpetually. Virtue and fear of God are not qualities inherent to station, age, or sex; but the whole mass of men are here capable of joining, since virtue is so extensive in its operations, that there is field enough for every one to act in righteousness. Nay more; the more virtuous deeds are committed, the further will the sphere of operation be extended, since the mass of iniquity is thereby diminished, and that of useful piety extended. Thus can every one be as a priest, and the whole Israelitish nation be a kingdom of priests, when all endeavour to lead a holy life, that is to say, when all by a simultaneous effort to act correctly contribute whatever is in their power,—be it little, be it much,—to act

virtuously themselves, and induce others to do likewise.—For this being holy they were promised the immediate favour of God, in fact, a continuation of the mercies which they had received already.—The terms of the covenant were soon made known to them; for on the third day the Lord descended in his awful glory, and proclaimed to the Israelites his will. And what willed He? were his laws those of inhumanity and ferocity? was his yoke too severe a burden? No; He commanded only the observance of a pure worship, where *reason* and not *ignorance* were to lead the people. In place of a multitude of adored beings or ideas, He placed before our parents *the idea of One Maker, Ruler, and Preserver of all things.*—In place of unmitigated service, He commanded that one day in the week every man, even the *slave*, should cease from labour, and thus to celebrate the creation of all by the One Creator!—In place of barbarities, of murders, theft, and false-swearing, and duplicity, He commanded that whatever a man was possessed of should be inviolably his, and not to be taken from him, except by a just, impartial, and as far as possible *merciful* judicial verdict. In fine, the foundation of the covenant is reason the most refined; its object humanity and peace. It was for this end that the Israelites had been redeemed from bondage, that they, moved by gratitude and separated from intercourse with the rest of sunken and degraded mankind, might be induced cheerfully to adopt a wise and beneficent code of laws devised by the Supreme Wisdom!—How those laws have acted, how many and innumerable benefits we have derived from them, how many nations have already been blessed with the light and wisdom and civilization derived even from their *shadow*: I will not now advert to, as this subject would lead me too far, even if I could hope to place it in a light becoming its importance before you. However, every one of you can institute an estimate for himself by merely taking a survey of the history of our people and that of any of the heathen nations. Weak in number, and well nigh exterminated by frequent wars and persecutions from enemies, we are yet left a proud monument of God's greatness and wisdom. Powerful in numbers, and conquering in war, our oppressors have passed away, and perhaps blackened ruins are nearly all that are left to tell: "Here

is the grave of a powerful, a wise, and a great nation!"—Let then the recurrence of this holy festival animate us to observe the terms of the covenant under which alone we can prosper! I speak advisedly, under the terms of the covenant alone we can prosper! Without this Israel is weak, is powerless,—with it every thing, in captivity and under sufferings! Nation has vied with nation to deprive us of this invaluable treasure; aye, they have tortured, slaughtered, and exposed millions to destruction, to compel us to lie down with them, to become as low as they were, degraded amongst men, and strangers to the pure religion of God. But thanks be to the All-ruling One, we are yet left, though few in number, to celebrate for more than the three thousandth time the anniversary of the great and glorious annunciation of the Decalogue. Who then can be so base, so unworthy of the name of man, as not to feel a glow of pride at the name of Israel, Israel the beloved people, which became the depositary of the heavenly purity of the law? Who is mean enough to barter away whatever is noble and elevated for gain, or a vain, empty, boastful renown? I hope there be but few who can sink so low from the elevated sphere pointed out to them by their Father above, few who care not to preserve their inestimable birthright!—Oh, brethren! let not the admonition of one, though so humble and unworthy as he who addresses you now, be lost upon you, and let every succeeding year find our number of faithful adherents undiminished, and let all the world see in our conduct, that we at least humbly strive to deserve in some little degree to be called "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!"

Glory be to God in heaven! and may his blessed light continually enlighten our souls, and may we thus all be led to happiness in a world where there is no darkness, no contention; but where all is reason and peace, and all is glory in the temple, where God alone is known, where the Eternal alone is worshipped. Amen.

Sivan 5th. }  
June 3d. } 5592.



## DISCOURSE XXII.

## THE VISITATION OF HEAVEN.

O LORD of the universe! Although unworthy through our manifold transgressions, we approach the seat of thy mercy, to crave thy favour and to seek thy protection. For already has the rod of thy anger been stretched out over the nations of the earth, and the dreaded punishment has already, even now, reached this land, and filled the cities with mourning and wailing for those slain by the workings of thy wrath!—We now bend with terror of heart before the awful effects of thy just anger, and supplicate thy forgiveness, O most merciful Father, for the many transgressions and the often repeated disobedience, which caused Thee to unloose against guilty mankind the pestilence, and to command destruction to go forth over the face of the earth!

The East and the West have alike felt the effects of thy indignation, and we have truly been taught, that from thy face there is no fleeing, and that there is no shield for the children of men from thy anger but in thy mercy. And in vain has been human activity; the physician's skill has been set at naught; for Thou hast bidden death, and who can prevail against Thee? Nations too have leagued to keep out the destroyer from their boundaries; but Thou makest the wings of the wind thy messenger, and the myriads of slain, covering the fair fields of their lands, proclaim the triumph of thy power. Armies also, in the full hope of conquest, have quailed before Thee; and they who were not conquered by men sunk before the power of thy outstretched arm!

Behold us now, O our Father, supplicating thy protection! Thou who art near when all other aid faileth! O spare thy people from the devouring pestilence, and guard them from the evil that is impending.—We gratefully acknowledge thy favour extended to Israel, in having so mercifully shielded them in

the midst of the nations visited by this calamity; be further gracious to us, and look with compassion upon the remnant of thy flock that has escaped !

Merciful and gracious Lord! humbly do we acknowledge our own unworthiness, because of our sins; but Thou hast said, that Thou wouldst ever be nigh unto those who call upon Thee with truth; and that Thou wouldst never despise the contrite and repentant heart; may it then be thy will to take under the protection of thy wing, not alone the children of the covenant, but also the inhabitants of this city and this land in which we reside, and the nations of all earth who may fly to Thee for aid, although they obey not thy laws which Thou hast given to our ancestors! and shield us and them from destruction, that they also may learn to reverence thy name, and to repent of the wrong they have done, and be saved according to thy abundant kindness. And oh, say to the angel of destruction: "Hold! stay thy hand;" so that we all may yet live and amend the evil of our ways before we are called hence to appear before Thee in judgment !

But not upon our virtue do we rely in asking thy favour, but solely upon thy kindness, for we have often been taught, that before Thee no flesh can be justified! In Thee alone we put our trust, O Father of mercy, who art everlasting, almighty, most merciful and gracious, withholding long thy anger, and full of kindness and truth; who preservest thy kindness unto the thousandth generation, and who pardonest wickedness, transgression, and sin; but who also visitest iniquity with just and paternal retribution!—O let now thy goodness be extended to thy children, for the sake of the covenant Thou hast made with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, to whom Thou hast sworn, that Thou wouldst be their God, and to their children after them, and though they should sin Thou wouldst remember, even in chastisement, thy mercy which is everlasting.—O guard then our steps, that we may not stumble, and protect us from the pestilence "that walketh in darkness and the destruction that stalketh forth in mid-day!"—And may this be thy will, and may the prayer of our lips, and the thoughts of our hearts, be acceptable to Thee, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen !

## BRETHREN!

Not to celebrate the annual recurrence of some joyful period of deliverance are we assembled this day; but to call, as it were, more unanimously than each individual can do by himself, upon the God of our destinies for an exemption of the dreadful scourge, which has been for fifteen years spreading desolation in its way, and has at length burst with fearful violence over our city, together with many other towns in this hitherto favoured hemisphere. We have for a time been indulged to behold from afar the punishment which was sent down upon distant lands; already we imagined, that here, at so great a distance, we should be safe. But, alas! the storm, which has been gathering for so long a period, has burst upon us in all its awful gloom, with all the suddenness of the lightning; and they who deemed themselves secure in the joy of health and life, are thrown upon the bed of wo, and before human aid can commence its battle with death, the spirit has flown, and is snatched from this earth, and its cares, and its enjoyments.

During the progress of this pestilence a rare, perhaps an unexampled, spectacle has presented itself to our view. Nations, those near and those far from the native soil of the dreaded disease, have endeavoured, by non-intercourse and other precautionary measures, to prevent its introduction into their lands, so that it appeared that if human power could do aught in averting the chastisement it would have been accomplished. But no, how vigilant soever the watchmen were, they had not the aid of God with them, and "vain is the watchman's vigilance if the Lord guardeth not the city;" and individuals who fled from infected places, thinking to escape by distance the death they dreaded at home, met it in the solitude of the mountain, the seclusion of the forest, and upon the stormy billows of the ocean. And if ever Scripture-truth was verified, the history of the cholera has done it as much as any event of which we have heard in profane story. I allude to the splendid description of God's omnipresence contained in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm of David, where the holy singer thus speaketh in the fulness of his heart: "O Eternal One, Thou hast searched me, and Thou knowest me; do I sit,

do I rise, it is known to Thee; already afar Thou probest my thoughts, my walk and my couch Thou hast measured for me, and prepared all my ways. Before yet a word was upon my tongue, Thou, O Lord! didst know all!—Whither shall I go from thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy face? if I ascend to heaven, Thou art there, and if I should lie down in the abyss, I should find Thee there! Should I fly on the wings of the morning-dawn, to dwell at the farthest end of the sea: even there thy hand would lead me, and thy right hand would seize me. If I should say, darkness shall surround me! then night even would become light around me; for darkness darkens not for Thee, and night shines like the day, and light and shadow are to Thee alike.”—It is this certainty of the entire inefficacy of human agency which has caused us this day to meet here at the house of God, to ask of Him an especial redemption from the devouring pestilence which now afflicts us; *us*, I say, for although we may as yet be free from sickness, we know not how soon our turn may come; and are we not afflicted, when we are conscious that so many of our fellow-mortals are at this very moment groaning and sinking under affliction, which no human vigour can long sustain? Let us, then, understand the nature of our appeal to the Deity, and let us see if the appeal should not have an especial effect upon ourselves, before we can expect to have our prayers answered from Heaven. As in all investigations, relating to our private as well as our public life, we ought to search the Bible for instruction and reference, let us adopt this religious course also in the present instance. In the Bible we are told, that whenever affliction befalls us, as soon as we find that our even path of existence becomes ruffled: we should turn our attention for succour to the Source of all goodness, and commence a rigid inquiry into our own conduct, so that, if we have acted amiss, we may begin to correct our errors, before we can with confidence look for a change in our misfortunes. And thus, says Solomon, in the prayer which he pronounced before all Israel at the time of the consecration of the temple which he had built for the worship of God: “When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against Thee, and shall turn again to Thee, and confess thy name, and pray and

make supplication unto Thee in this house : then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land of their fathers.—When the heaven is shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against Thee ; if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when Thou afflictest them: then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that Thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land which Thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.—If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts, or if there be caterpillars; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities, whatsoever *plague or sickness* there be ; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, who shall know every man the plague of his heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house : then hear Thou in heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest (for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all children of men); that they may fear Thee all the days that they live in the land which Thou gavest unto our fathers.”—Here, brethren, we have a proper exposition of the nature of prayer, and of the objects for which all punishment is sent on earth.—You will have observed already, that in many parts of the Bible temporal punishments are uniformly threatened as a necessary consequence of dereliction from religious duties. Now, some may ask: “Why did Moses not say, that if you (the Israelites) will not obey the laws I have laid before you you shall be punished after death, and specify the various degrees of punishment then to be inflicted?” To this we should answer: that both this life and the life everlasting, are the creation of the same truly infinite Being. But man in his human existence, by which I would understand his sojourn on earth, is, as said on a former occasion, a compound of the finite and infinite; finite in so far as his body is composed of material substances; infinite, or at least what our understanding will distinguish by this appellation, in as far as his soul does not partake of the nature of matter. Now let it be observed, that in this state of being, all ideas conveyed to our

mind are borrowed in their limits from the natural world. Thus are our joys always founded upon grounds which afford us pleasure, profit, or renown, things in themselves positive, or considered so by universal consent. And then, also, our grief is derived from causes which yield pain, infamy, poverty, or contempt. Perhaps, there may be found by an inquirer some more diversified and more minute descriptions of feelings; but for our present purpose it is enough to adopt merely the foregoing positions, without entering into a complex definition of the operations of our mind.—The truth of these positions is too self-evident to stand in need of argument, and let us, therefore, proceed to apply them to the subject of our to-day's consideration.—Pains and pleasures of this life are positive, that is to say, we can either count, measure, or at least survey their advantages or disadvantages; Moses, therefore, speaking to men, and not to angels, continually drew the attention of his hearers to the state of rewards and punishments which could befall the nation at large, as an evidence of the divine favour or displeasure. To argue from his silence on spiritual punishments and rewards after death, that the life everlasting is no part of the Mosaic dispensation: would only betray in him who makes the assertion the grossest ignorance of many passages in the Bible, which can only be explained upon the assumption, that the immortality of the soul, its reward and punishment, and the resurrection of the dead, were matters of universal belief among the Israelites of the first temple. Moses, however, did not speak, when speaking of rewards and punishments, with but few exceptions, of the individual Israelites, but of the whole nation together; thus, that their prosperity should depend upon obedience, and that disobedience would be sure to be followed by calamity. We may freely leave it to any one to answer, what kind of punishment, whether temporal or permanent, should be inflicted upon a nation? Surely the temporal appears to our understanding even to be the best manner for telling the world in a language not to be mistaken: "Upon this land rests the displeasure of God!"—If then any sudden and unexpected calamity comes over a land, or if the whole habitable globe even should suffer simultaneously under a severe affliction: it becomes us, as religious men, to ascribe

it, not to chance, not to some fortuitous change in the atmosphere, not to some telluric poison, not to some extraordinary assemblage of insects, or all these and the like causes combined, acting without the express agency of the Supreme; but solely to his action, by which He wishes to affix his mark of displeasure upon mankind. Grant even to the deniers of a Providence all they ask, yield to them their assertion, that the air we breathe is pestiferous; that the exhalations of the earth are at this moment noxious vapours; that death is hidden in the water we drink, and in the food we take to sustain life; grant all this and more, for all may be true, since we have no means of disproving it: and yet we, in common with every thinking being, must insist, that it is a judgment of Heaven; for God alone is capable of making the air more pestiferous than it commonly is; render the earth itself a propagator, as well as the parent, of a subtle infection, and cause our drink and food to be filled and secretly embued with poison, destructive of life. The more natural causes you produce, the stronger becomes the evidence, that all we witness this day comes from Him who is the Maker of light, and the Creator of darkness.

“But why should this wrath be poured out upon earth? Does God ever exercise judgment, without a cause?”—No thought of this kind, brethren, ought ever to enter your mind; no Israelite, how little soever he may usually cogitate upon matters of religion, should suffer prejudice so gross to warp his mind, as to accuse the Supreme of injustice!—“But the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and upright in all his deeds!” the world have sinned, and for the sake of their sins has judgment been executed on them.—We, indeed, flatter ourselves often, that the present age is the most enlightened one since the creation; we also assume to ourselves a certain share of piety, of pure religion, and of freedom from superstition, unknown to our ancestors; and thus fancying, we imagine that we live in the peace of God, and need not to disturb our minds about the minor points, so we call them, of religious observance.—But we deceive ourselves: we are not more enlightened than were many ages in olden times; our virtue is at best but very questionable; our piety is often guided by interest and ambition; and (I will not include any of my

hearers,) there are many who make religion a profession, an axe to chop with, a handle to govern others, and a crown to glorify themselves, not before God, for this would be laudable, but before men, and this is the very acmé of hypocrisy. I do not exaggerate; this is not, I acknowledge, a true picture of all, but certainly of a vast number of those who outwardly profess religion. But what shall I say of the great mass of unbelievers, who if even reluctantly compelled to admit the existence of a God (I almost shudder when I speak it), so circumscribe, in their vain imaginings, his power, as merely to constitute Him the searcher of hearts, a passive looker-on on the affairs of this world? And what are the consequences of this heresy, and of that which asserts "there is no law from Heaven?" but that immorality has progressed with frightful rapidity, that dissoluteness and drunkenness show themselves in the face of day, and that acts of irreligion are barely thought reprehensible! Do these assertions offend us? how much more should we feel ashamed, that sheer truth must compel every reflecting mind to make an acknowledgment of the distressing fact *to himself*, if even compassion for his fellow-creatures prevents him from speaking *aloud* his conviction. Do we want proof? our own eyes are daily disgusted with the multitude of those, whose evident marks of dissipation prove them to be destined to an untimely grave. Drunkenness and profanity few of their votaries deign even to hide by the flimsy veil of hypocrisy; and unfortunately we all here assembled have seen and felt enough to convince us, that all religious feelings are often thrown aside, even by many grown gray in its service, as a man would cast off a worn-out garment, no longer fit for decent covering; and the house of God is deserted, because forsooth, we must by main force compel God to give us riches, and the days of the Lord's appointment are therefore looked upon as no better than other days, for the reasoning, that we are not born to starve! And is this not true?—And since no one can gainsay it, why then, I ask, shall we express aught of astonishment at the judgment which is even now in the course of being inflicted upon the earth. It is our sins that have made a division between us and our God, and justly do we suffer, for we have been rebellious against his words.



Since now we acknowledge in God the Dispenser of the punishment, we have to-day assembled to ask of Him, by prayer, to stay the evil, and to come to our help; since He who has afflicted is alone able to save us!—But before we dare to hope for assistance, we must first look into our conduct, to see what requires amendment, what total disuse, and what virtues neglected are again to be cultivated!—God is merciful; this our daily experience teaches us, since He suffers the sun to shine upon the wicked as well as the good; since He striketh not down the sinner at the moment of his transgression, but permits him to live and repent. Nevertheless, calamities are the concomitants of sin; and if even the transgressor imagines, that a long course of vice, having so long remained without just recompense, will for ever remain unpunished: he will to his sorrow find, that the Eye above watches unceasingly, and that the ears of the Lord are ever open to the cries of the oppressed orphan and the complaints of the wronged widow; and punishment will come, when, perhaps, least expected. Aye, calamities are the rods in the hands of God, and with them He chastises the rebellious and careless, that they may return, repent, and live! Let this day, then, be the commencement of a sincere return to God, and let us be mindful of the words of the prophet, who says:

לְכוּ וּנְשׁוּבָה אֵלֵי ה' כִּי הוּא טָרַף וִירְפָאנוּ יְךָ וַיַּחְבְּשֵׁנוּ :  
 הוֹשַׁע ו' א' :

“O come and let us return unto the Lord, for He has torn and will also heal us; He has smitten us, and will also bind up our wounds.”

Hosea vi. 1.

Here the Bible teaches us some valuable lessons, which, permit me, briefly to enumerate.—The first is, that whatever befalls us, be it evil, be it good, is the work of the Lord; chance has no agency in the direction of affairs, and whatever of healing, whatever of wounds we find, are therefore to be ascribed to the Supreme Source.—The second consideration is, that nothing happens without cause, that is to say, no calamity, either individual or national, is sent without there is sin for its origin, and amendment in its object.—And a third consequence we are

taught, that by repentance the punishment may be averted before it comes, or be suspended after it has already begun its ravages.—But what is repentance? Is it merely to enter the house of God after a long absence, perhaps, and say to Him: “O our Father, we have sinned!” and repeat thereafter our former course? Aye, if even we fast an entire day, nay, periodically for forty days, to equal, as far as our feeble strength will permit, the time of Moses’s presence on Mount Sinai; is this repentance, I ask?—No, brethren, this is mere lip-worship, a repentance in which the heart has no share, and such conduct is denounced by Isaiah, who says: “Forasmuch as this people draw near with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men: Therefore, behold I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a miracle: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” (Isaiah xxix. 13–14).—Repentance must not consist in *mere* outward show, for though men might be imposed upon by the specious appearance of the seeming repentant, God will not be; and what availeth the opinion of the world in matters of virtue, where our Father above is the sole judge?—Nor, although we must condemn hypocrisy of the kind just described, can the other species be approved of, which would induce a man to speak thus: “I acknowledge my error—I am sorry for it—I wish it were otherwise; but my situation in life compels me to do as others do;” or, “vice has grown upon me by long indulgence, as a second nature, and my very existence is threatened, if I mend now.” How often has repentance been pushed off by such pretexts! How numberless are the victims of the most dangerous hypocrisy! for a reasoner of this class imagines, there is no wrong in his doings; for since he cannot avoid sinning, he cannot be blamed, and consequently that he ought not to be punished for it. But there is an error of the most fatal kind at the bottom of all this. Let us examine, for instance, the drunkard’s plea:—that drinking has become absolutely necessary to him, and that abstinence would be followed by death.—The latter assertion may be true; but what then? Was it not wrong

in the first instance to commence the sinful course? Now, even suppose that his life should be the forfeit of his repentance (which is, however, very doubtful); would it not be better for him to die in virtue, if he thereby can obtain the forgiveness he so much needs, rather than live in degradation and die in sin?—I merely adopt this example as an illustration, and for every answer: “I cannot help sinning,” we may find an equally strong, and even a much stronger refutation!—Upon the whole, it is as much the duty of the sinner to repent at all hazards, as it is the original duty of all men to act uprightly from the beginning; and there is no distinction between men, why one should be absolutely compelled to be bad, whilst another is good. And if we find the circumstances around us calculated to draw us into vice and irreligion, we are bound to get rid of them; and if we but begin, we shall have soon ample means afforded as to carry our reformation into effect; as we are taught by our wise men: “Whoever comes to purify himself, will be aided from Heaven.”

Having thus shown the danger of hypocrisy on the one side, and self-deception, which is but another species of hypocrisy, on the other, let us go a little farther into the extent of repentance. Repentance, to be real, must neither be partial nor temporary; and if you once begin to find yourselves in the wrong; if you discover, lurking in your bosom, the demon of impiety or insincerity, it is your duty to root out the evil. Do not merely, to use a physical simile, cover it with a cataplasm, to eradicate it by degrees, but go resolutely to work, and applying the knife of reformation, stop not till even the springs and roots of the malady are extracted. This alone can be a reformation, upon which the Almighty, who knoweth all secrets, can look with pleasure; for every thing short of this is but self-deception, since although we apparently attempt to deceive the Deity, we cannot do so, as He knoweth all the secrets of our hearts. And much as a sincere repentance is approved of in Scriptures, we find a hollow and insincere confession of sin denounced as displeasing and abhorrent to the God of truth; for so we read in the seventy-eighth Psalm:

“Nevertheless, they sinned again, and they trusted not in his wonders. In vain endeavours passed away their lives, and

their years in thoughtlessness. They sought Him when He smote them, repented, and called on God, well remembering that God was their rock, and the Supreme their Redeemer. And yet they thought to deceive Him with their mouth, and with their tongue they lied to Him: but their heart was not firm on Him, and they were not true to his covenant; but He, the Merciful, forgave the iniquity, destroyed them not, withdrew often his anger, and poured not out the whole of his wrath."

Let me therefore beseech you, brethren! on this day of wo and lamentation, to reflect that we, in part, as members of the human family, are, through our misconduct, the cause that the pestilence now walketh abroad. And well has the destroyer fulfilled the command given him! He appears within the walls of a city, and the affrighted inhabitants fly as before the pursuing sword of a vengeful foe! Anon, the men skilled in the craft of healing endeavour to grapple with the enemy; they marshal their forces, as well becomes them who ween themselves to be the guardians of our health, and in truth may deserve our thanks, under Heaven, for the care with which they apply the skill and experience which God has vouchsafed them. But wo! neither flying nor skilful endeavours can shield the city; and in the haunts of dissoluteness, amongst the nightly revellers, in the house of the drunkard, soon the groans of dreadful sufferings tell, that here breaks a heart that expected not the stroke of death! And desolation and mourning are carried into the bosom of many a virtuous family even (for so is the sad visitation), and the number of the dying are hourly increased, until the very heart within our bosom sinks, and the chill of apprehension seizes hold of the stoutest mind!—And all this is the fruit of sin, the consequence of our transgression; and yet we hesitate, we seem barely to heed the warning, as though it spoke not as loudly as ever the prophet's voice did; "Return ye, for why will you die, O house of Israel!" And O, say not: "It is too late now,—the plague is once upon us, we cannot expect to be favoured;" no, it is never too late, for come with a sincere heart, and you will be heard by your Father, even in the hour of pressing danger; for we are promised in the fiftieth Psalm: "And but call upon

me, in the day of trouble, I will save thee, if thou but honour-est me.”—This is the language of God to his children; and it is we only who reject the gracious boon by our perverseness and obduracy, in thinking too little of the word of the Lord, where so many glorious promises are held out, to encourage the virtuous in his onward course, and the sinner to repentance.—But neither should the contemptuous say: “The danger will soon be over, and in a few days, all will be safe again!” by which he would argue, that there is no necessity for repentance. But why? is the danger over when the pestilence has passed away? may it not return with fearful violence, and sweep off, as its first victim perhaps, the very man, who thinks all is right with him? And again is this disease the only instrument of punishment? we all know that this is not so; and, although the present occasion is peculiarly calculated to awaken our attention: there are a thousand occurrences in our daily experience calculated to admonish us, that we are always in the hands of God, and that in the midst of life we are in death!—Another one may say: “Why shall I repent, I see no others doing so, and what good can my example do?” Thus reasons the one, who is in all his doings guided by fashion; but the wise should resolve to do his duty at all risks, to exercise the right, if even he stands alone; and as for the benefits of an individual’s example, every person, even the most humble, can do great service to virtue, since we know not, by what chain of events the efforts of the most lowly, and the example of the most obscure, may bring even a king upon his throne to repentance.

Another objection, which the ignorant may perhaps urge, it behoves us to refute. It may be asked: “Since the soul is immortal, and since life is so surrounded by dangers, why is it desirable, that we should live?”—If it were, indeed, that every human being were entirely isolated, unconnected with any other member of the human family, it might be at times, to judge superficially, a matter of indifference, whether a man were to die or to live. But, as every man is more or less connected with others of his species, as upon the life and health of one man the welfare of perhaps thousands depends, the subject under consideration assumes a different aspect. The good may die, as far as he himself is concerned, with perfect advan-

tage to himself; but the world cannot well spare him, he is so to say a beacon, by which other navigators of the ocean of life must steer their course! And what is more animating, what more exciting to virtue, than to see the aged, patriarchal sage, dispensing the experience, which his long and glorious life of wisdom and virtue has endowed him with? And oh, when his benignant smile is at length stayed by death, when his benevolent eye is at length extinguished, how lightly does the earth seem to drop upon the coffin of the departed, and the grass and flowers that deck his grave seem to shed fragrance and blessing around them!—And the sinner—is he fit to die? where are his deeds of righteousness with which he can appear before God? and he shall, as a matter of indifference, be suddenly cut off? And truly, to the world his departure can cause no sorrow—his presence will scarcely be missed by men;—but to himself, how dreary the prospect! to die—his sins unrepented, his transgressions unforgiven, and his *soul* doomed to punishment, till the Almighty Judge shall have decreed her sufferings as sufficient atonement! It is, therefore, that long life is a blessing; for the virtuous is blest, whilst blessing others, and the sinner is thereby indulged with ability to repent and be forgiven! To be forgiven! this idea is the bright star in the gloom of trouble! to be forgiven if we repent, for God is kind! to be received back again in the mansion of our Father, if we return! How long this indulgence may be left us, it behoves us not to guess at, since God has called forth the pestilence; and we, therefore, should all look upon ourselves as dying men, as we know not whose bosom may next be perforated by the arrows of death which are scattered abroad. Let this day then be the commencement of a serious reformation, so that if we are taken hence, we may be admitted into happiness; and that, if even this be the last day that we shall be gratified here on earth by a view of the heavens, by the light of the sun, the verdure of the fields, and the song of the woodland songsters when they warble forth their morning hymn to their Maker; if even this be the last hour, that we shall be permitted to see our friends; if even this be the last time, that we are in the house of God—we yet may be forgiven and received into God's favour, and that, when our soul awakens from the dream

of earthly existence, and the trance of death, she may join in with the chorus of angels, and the rejoicings of the saints, whose resting place is now round the throne of Glory, overshadowed by the grace of the Eternal One!

O Lord ! grant us life and salvation, spare us from the devouring scourge, which Thou hast appointed, to warn nations to repentance; but if Thou hast decreed death upon us, or any of thy children, let then our departure and pain of dying be an expiation for our crimes, and receive us in favour in thy presence. Amen !

Menachem 12th. }  
August 8th. } 5592.

NOTE.—The foregoing address was written for the occasion of the day of fasting, prayer, and humiliation, proclaimed by Governor Wolf, whilst the cholera raged in Philadelphia. It made its first appearance in America, about the eighth of June at Quebec, and in the beginning of August it reached its highest point of malignity in this place. It declined after the middle of that month; but returned two years later, although in a much milder form, and with a less extensive range. It is remarkable enough, that not one adult died, of this disease, among the Israelites of this place.

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### DISCOURSE XXIII.

#### OBEDIENCE AND REPENTANCE.

O, OUR FATHER AND KING ! we have sinned before Thee,—pardon Thou our transgressions ! O, our God, we have been disobedient to thy will—do Thou forgive the children of thy servants in thy unbounded mercy !—And show us in pity and kindness, that they are safe who trust in Thee ; that they are not lost who seek forgiveness at the foot of thy throne ; and grant us life and salvation, and avert from us the evil which

our misdeeds may have merited ; and vouchsafe to accept our fasting and prayer in pleasure. Amen.

### BRETHREN !

It is but a few days since we listened in this place to the sound of the cornet, which was to renew in our hearts the acknowledgment of God's almighty power, and to rouse our minds to devotional feelings and repentance.—Let us hope, that knowing the object of the blowing of the shophar, it has not sounded in vain to our ears ;—that in this and other communities it has made some hearts conscious of their weakness ; and that they have been reinduced, feeling the unworthiness of their course, to espouse the cause of sacred religion, firmly resolved to unite themselves so closely to their God, that this bond of union shall never more again be broken. To bind ourselves to God—that is the chief, in fact the only, duty which the law demands of us, and by it is understood an affectionate regard to the precepts of religion, an entire reliance upon Divine Providence, and a cheerful resignation to God's dispensation.—I say that this feeling may be termed the *only duty* which we have to fulfil ; for where the heart is so imbued, obedience to the details of the law is the necessary consequence ; and in return, it is the result of a life of the most devoted piety. To effect this end, therefore, is the object of all the commandments we have received ; and to prevent our ever losing sight of the same we have many ceremonial observances, which uniformly tend to arrest our attention, so that by being often led to inquire into the nature of religion, we may be brought to apply the circumstances and events connected with them to ourselves, and thus be rendered more thoughtful, more contemplative, and in consequence more rational and more pious !—As a consequence from this exposition, we should never let any religious act be performed by ourselves, or see it performed by others, without our making an application of it to our situation, and suffering it in this manner to have the desired effect upon us.—The effect desired by the divine law is, primarily, obedience ; in the next place, action ; thirdly, improvement ; and lastly, our happiness ! Observe, brethren, that not one religious duty is the result of a mere whim of the Deity ; for



no matter how unimportant soever any thing may seem to us, it is intended for our moral, and perhaps also our physical, improvement.—But what are the fruits of piety? Contentment and satisfaction;—contentment with the lot which the Almighty may have assigned us, be it humble, be it high; and satisfaction with ourselves—not that pompous self-sufficiency which would teach us to look upon ourselves as perfect, and every one else as far beneath us; but that sort of ease, of calmness, which arises from a review of a life unstained by irreligion, not deformed by moral turpitude.—And these are the fruits of the union with God which was alluded to above; and what earthly treasures are beyond them in value? are riches, are power, and glory—are honour and notoriety to be classed with them? where are the riches which ever gave contentment and satisfaction? when did power and glory leave a mortal nothing more to sigh for? and did you ever see that man who was honoured of men and renowned for wisdom, at whose heart the canker-worm of dissatisfaction gnawed not with greedy fatality?—But the truly pious, who looks upon the will of God as the purest source of all that is valuable, and who regards his word as the essence of wisdom, can never be said to be miserable, can never be utterly bereft of all treasures; for he carries that within him which no riches can buy, aye, that which the king on his throne, even on the very day of triumph, might envy, for it is the invaluable treasure of an inward peace of mind. And taking this standard then as the standard of happiness, we may inquire: “Without an inward peace of mind, how can life be happy? without a peace with God, how can our mind, our life be peaceful? without a love to God how can we have his peace? without his religion how can we love Him?”—Thus should we reason, brethren! and if we do this, we must of necessity turn our view from the world without to the mind within, and if we find not peace there we will, if we have not altogether closed our eyes against the only remedy within our reach, endeavour to introduce into our soul the love of God and of his law, as a restorative to heal the wounds of our agonized spirit.

This view at once brings us to the inquiry: “If piety is so valuable, what means are we to use to acquire it?” To this

we answer,—obedience and repentance. “What is obedience?” It is not merely an acknowledgment in words of the justness of the divine commands, not a mere theoretical acquiescence in the truth of revelation; but also a cheerful and ever ready compliance with the demands of religion. In other words, faith and belief alone, though they are the guides to piety, are not the sole component parts thereof, for deeds alone can finish the beautiful structure of mental greatness, which listening to the doctrines of faith and a confidence in their truth have commenced in the soul of man; or to comprehend the whole in one sentence, religion should both be inward and outward! “And repentance?” is that state of regret for past misconduct, and that atonement for errors which should be resorted to, when we discover that our inward peace has been destroyed by a neglect of the laws of God, or by an absolute contravention to the decrees of the holy Torah; or in other words, we should regret our past conduct, and act differently from what we used to do, as soon as we discover, that we have strayed from the righteous path. Thus also speaks the prophet:

שובה ישראל ער ה' אלהיך כי כשלת בעונך : קחו  
 עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה' אמרו אליו כל תשא עון וקח  
 טוב ונשלמה פרים שפתינו : הושיע יד' ב'-ג' :

“Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God, though degraded by thy sins! Turn but with prayer unto the Lord, and say: Thou Most Perfect, Pardoner of sins! accept our return to good, and receive our words as favourably as Thou didst the offered steers.” Hosea xiv. 2-3.

“Return, O Israel to the Lord thy God!” this is the call which the Shepherd addresses to the strayed flock; it is the language of encouragement spoken by the Almighty himself to the reluctant, trembling sinner; it is the paternal invitation held out by the indulgent Father to the oft-offending and rebellious child. To understand now properly this prophetic call, this invitation to the purifying and reconsecration of ourselves to divine service, let us examine a little more minutely the nature of our dependence upon God, the causes of our transgressions, and the effect which the indulgence in sin must have upon us.—

To the first inquiry: "What is the nature of our relation to the Deity? in what respect are we said to be depending upon Him?" We answer: Man is indebted for his existence and preservation to God; that is to say, without a Creator, no being can exist, and without the continued watchfulness of this Creator no created being can be preserved in existence. We are, therefore, absolutely speaking, not only the mere works of God, with whom He can act as pleases Him best; but also nothing without Him, since if He does not bless our efforts all our toiling is in vain; and thus too our daily experience proves to us, that not to the strong is the battle; not to the swift the race; not to the industrious riches, and not to the wise, bread. This position being admitted, that we are nothing without God: it follows that being so dependent, it should be our study to deserve favour; or, what is the same, we should strive, being certified of the will of God, to live conformably to the precepts contained in the record of the divine will. To the reflecting mind, therefore, piety, both theoretical and practical, is the most natural, and so far, therefore, from its being the effect of ignorance, it springs from the best of knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves.—"What now are the causes of sin?"—Man, being unmindful of his origin, and confident in his conceit of his own importance, neglects to look with becoming deference to the will of God, and acts not as his reason dictates, but as his passions or supposed interests lead. A man so constituted in mind imagines himself to be something superior to the rest of his fellow-beings, or he thinks he has too great an interest at stake to be able to attend to the duties of a pious life; and being thus, as it were, all in all to himself, he weens he needs not further improvement; his perfection he conceives to be complete; and consequently the voice of religion cannot find in him a willing listener; and as soon as this is the case the floodgates of sin are opened, and sins upon sins, crimes upon crimes, are heaped upon the heart of the selfish, proud reasoner, and he stands a hideous spectacle of blasted moral deformity.—Another cause of irreligion can be found in carelessness and a desire for pleasure, which are to a full as pernicious as the preceding cause. Some one imagines himself to be *beneath* the notice of Providence; he thinks that to One so

elevated beyond all earthly influence, as the God we adore, will not notice (it being, as he thinks, unworthy of the Divine Nature) the actions of man; and since God does not regard our conduct, it would be needless to pay any attention to the duties of religion, by which we are taught to bridle our passions and to rein in our desires; and consequently the voluptuary hurries on eager for his ruin, till virtue is neglected and sin has become a habit too inveterate almost for reformation!—But who of you, brethren, sees not the folly of both the above excuses for sin?—One boasts of the superiority of his reasoning—aye, his superior wisdom—excellent moral energy!—and in what are they displayed? in charity? in filial piety? in enlightening the ignorant? in devotion? No, in avarice, in the pursuit of ambition, in idle declamation, and in dissoluteness; perhaps too in ridiculing those who dare to follow the better counsels of reason guided by the truths of revelation.—The irreligious scorns the humble believer, and asks him: “What avails all piety?” But with how much more justice must the moralist laugh at all the vain pursuits of mankind who strut, full of their own importance, their brief space on the stage of life, and are then hurried hence into oblivion, into the total darkness of utter forgetfulness.—Look at the ambitious tyrant, how he is toiling to oppress his subjects, look at his fury when seeing his commands unobeyed—and then behold him again struck by the sudden dart of the pestilence, and all his power broken; and the veriest menial in his palace would not change situations with him, who was but a few hours before envied and feared by all mankind!—The philosopher who scoffs at the credulity, so he calls it, of others, is not immortal; for years he has poured forth his blasphemy; he has even shocked his fellow-workmen in iniquity by his daring attacks on all that is sacred; perhaps he imagines that he has succeeded in erecting to his name a monument of greatness, and that his system of selfish utility will rise triumphant above the ruins of religion; but turn your eye upon him now, he is smitten down with palsy, hear his indistinct murmurings, and the only articulate sounds he has uttered during his illness are prayers for a few more fleeting hours of existence!—Again, you call the rich man happy;—his interest demanded his unceasing attention, *honest* he was always, for he prided himself

upon the name of correct, punctual merchant; but religion and the exercise of charity he knew barely by name, they belonged not to the routine of business, and he therefore had no relish for them. But death arrested him in the midst of his endeavours; and with not half his wants satisfied, he is borne to the grave, and strangers riot in his riches!

Now tell me, doubter, are such pursuits superior to the active pursuit of religion, whereby imperishable good will be treasured up, not here—where all is mortal—but there in heaven, where no canker-worm destroys the fruit of virtuous deeds, where no decay destroys imperishable monuments of God's favour, where no death destroys the life everlasting? If even, therefore, interest and wisdom alone were to teach us, we ought from preference to choose piety. But it would not be consonant with true religion to serve God from motives of being rewarded; for what does the law say? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" meaning the love towards God should be, not the respect of the servant who hopes for reward when his work is done, but like the love which the dutiful child bears towards the parent, where all the duties, even those more arduous than a servant can perform, are cheerfully submitted to without the hope of reward or favour.

Having thus briefly examined the futility of pride as an excuse of sin, let us turn to the second chief reason, carelessness.—The careless one says, "God regards not our course of life, it is unworthy of his greatness to imagine that He should trouble himself about the conduct of mortals."—But is it true, that it is beneath the dignity of God?—Pray, inform us, if thou canst, careless sinner, what is deserving of God's notice? Is it to regulate the course of the stars? the arrangement of nature? the calling into being of all things? These, surely, thou too wouldst call objects of grandeur—transcendant majesty; and yet they all are no more than thou art; for the *word* that formed *thee*, formed *them* too, and however little thou mayest value *thy* importance, thou wast created, as well as the brightest star in the wide expanse of heaven, for the glory of thy Maker!—If man were thus to take a correct view of his own importance in the scale of beings, he would act as

becomes his dignity, and the station he occupies, as an intelligent creature of the Supreme Author, and he would never suffer his life to pass away in the pursuits of pleasure and the empty nothings of this world.

The Scriptures too inveigh against this sheltering of ourselves behind the idea of our being of but small importance, and they emphatically teach us, that nothing, not excepting the acts of mortal men, is beneath the notice of God, for He surveys all without any effort, and from his all-searching gaze nothing is hidden.—And thus speaks the Psalmist :—“ Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph ! They oppress thy people, and afflict thine heritage ; they slay the widow and stranger, and murder the fatherless ; and say : the Lord sees not, and the God of Jacob regards it not. But understand, ye brutish among the people ; and ye fools, when will ye be wise ? He, that planteth the ear, shall He not hear ? He, that formeth the eye, shall He not see ? He, that chastiseth the heathen, shall He not correct ? He, that teacheth man knowledge, shall He not know ? ”—And if man would but reflect, that to Him, who created the *materials* of creation, it cannot make any difference of exertion in producing the greatest or the smallest thing known ; that the same creative energy produced, by word, the hosts of constellations and the humble worm of the earth : he would never think that any thing could by any possibility be hidden from God ; for if He knows the course of nature in the aggregate ; if to his omniscience the beginning and the consummation of all is known, can it be otherwise than that He should also know all that passes, all that is transacted in all creation, if even each star and every planet should be peopled by intelligent beings, who like us act and think ?—But it is useless almost to argue with one predetermined to sin ; he will strive to prove to you, that there is no positive wrong in his conduct ; that it is immaterial upon the whole, if he do this or omit doing the other : and either under the plea of insignificance or superior mental endowments he will act as his tastes, interest, passions, or folly, may counsel him.

These briefly are the causes of sin, as far as I can speak of them with confidence ; much more may be said about the ramifications in which these causes divide themselves, but the limits

of an address do not permit me to enlarge any more upon them. Having thus seen the motives, let us view the effects of transgression. To understand the pernicious effects of sin, you should look with proper care upon the benefits of virtue, and the contrast will teach you, emphatically, the advantages and disadvantages of either.—The virtuous will look upon himself as a servant of God, amenable for every part of his conduct to a Superior Tribunal. In accordance with this consciousness, he will be humble in his own person ; not too confident in asserting the claims of his own merit ; meek and submissive to others, where mere superiority of rank or the maintainance of pride can be the result ; kind to those who are his inferior in life ; charitable to those who may need his gifts ; considerate to the unfortunate ; respectful to superiors, parents, and teachers : he will be the obedient son, affectionate husband, and watchful father ; withal cheerful in his own mind ; in short, he will always be at peace with God, his fellow-men, and himself !—But the vicious is haughty, and is, as it were, alone in the world, for nothing can, in his estimation, be superior to self ; and in accordance with this assumption he will be overbearing in his own person ; always setting forth his superior claims to excellence ; insolent and arrogant to others, never allowing them any superiority, and will consider an offence against his dignity as almost the greatest crime ; he will be cold and distant to his inferiors, even though they possess superior merit ; niggardly to the poor ; oppressive to the unfortunate ; cringing, low and servile to superiors, although he hates them in his heart ; rebellious to the commands of his parents or teachers : he will be the disobedient son ; unkind husband, and cruel father ; withal gloomy in his own mind ; in short, he will always be at war with God, with his fellow-beings, and with himself !—These are the fruits of virtue, and these the results of vice. It needs no eloquence to impress upon your minds the beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other ; and yet we hear many descanting upon the pleasures they enjoy in their course of sin, and laughing at those who act differently. Aye, they are for a time intoxicated with the maddening draughts of seductive vice ; they are overwhelmed with the moral delirium of dissipation ; but at length,

be this consummation sooner or later, they awake from their unnatural trance, alive to all the horror of their exposed situation, and at the brink of ruin they discover (to employ the words of Scripture), that their way, which had appeared just in their eyes, was in truth, the way to death and destruction!—Imagine now, brethren, what indeed you actually see almost every hour, the sinner at length regretting the little benefit and the immense injury accruing to him as the wages of sin, when he discovers, when almost too late, that all the subterfuges, which passions invented, are not able to hide, even from his jaundiced vision, the destructive end to which he has been hurrying: imagine him, I say, at this natural termination of all wickedness—what must his *feelings* be? whither shall he fly for consolation? To his own family? Them he has neglected, perhaps has been to them the cause of thousand-fold misery and disgrace. To his friends and associates in transgression?—they despise the weak fool who no longer is willing to devote heart, body, and soul, to their proceedings; they despise and scorn the timid and broken down boon-companion, and they will no longer his fellowship; much less are they disposed to follow his advice about resigning their pleasures, and will even say: “You speak now, when you are weak and old, of regret, and amendment; so too we will do, when we have rioted as long as you; when our strength has become exhausted, just as yours is now; when our appetite has become cloyed by excess of enjoyment.” Shall he turn for refuge to society, to mankind at large? No, their enemy he has been; he has trampled upon their laws, and has derided their institutions; and even now they are leading him off to the place of confinement, there to expiate his offences against the ordinances of society.—Where then shall he find refuge?—Even in that venerable faith, which to him spoke not with the voice of the parent, because he was deaf to its admonitions; even in the bosom of that Church, a native in whose covenant he was ashamed to confess himself; even in the hope of salvation of that God, whose laws he refused to regard with reverence, and after whose inscrutable ways he madly dared to search; for thus speaketh the word: “Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God, though degraded by thy sins.” And let every man, every sinful mortal (for all men are sinful),



but take this comfort to his agonized soul, and the healing balm will not be wanting ; and if even much wrong has been committed, let every one who seeks, because he needs, for mercy, reflect (as teach our wise men), “that the gates of mercy are never closed ;” let him, who is in want of consolation, but fearlessly yet humbly approach, and he may rest assured that his entreaty shall not be in vain ; for as Jeremiah says (Lamentations iii. 25) : “The Lord is kind to those who put their trust in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him !” But there must not be any species of duplicity in this seeking, in this return to good : there must not be holding out the left hand as it were to Heaven, and seizing with the right the goods and pleasures of life with an unrelenting grasp, for this would not be a return to the Lord with all our hearts ; on the contrary, it could at best amount to no more than merely resigning that part of our enjoyments or occupations which has grown intolerable to us, from the entire want of satisfaction it has hitherto afforded, or the positive pain it may have produced. But a return to the Lord, one that deserves the name, should not merely be a regret of evil, but a positive return to good, so that we may be enabled to say in sincerity : “O Pardoner of sins, accept our return to good !” for nothing less than this can be satisfactory to our heavenly Father, who, knowing every secret of the human breast, cannot be deceived by outward appearance, and cannot be satisfied whilst He discovers deceit lurking along with professed penitence !

“How then shall we repent ?—What means are we to employ to return to good ?”—As soon as we are made conscious, that our conduct is not such as we would like to become known to all the world ; as soon as we feel a *burning* sensation of shame, of self-reproach ; the moment we feel by reflection or the admonition of others that we have acted unworthily of the dignity of human nature, unbecoming the duties obligatory upon us as children of God : we should unhesitatingly set about removing the cause of self-reproach or the public reprehension ; we should pretermitt repeating the act, and at the same time endeavour to make reparation. If we have wronged another in his possessions, person, or reputation, we should make reparation in kind ; that is to say, we should restore the stolen or

wrongfully obtained property, and add the fifth part of the value thereto, as the law dictates; if we have committed a personal injury, we should endeavour to restore an equivalent in personal pleasures to the injured party, as far as may be possible; and if we have injured our neighbour in reputation, we are bound to make public declaration that we have been unjust to him, and we dare not withdraw ourselves behind our *greatness* if the offence has been committed towards an inferior, for we should reflect that before God the greatest is no more than the least; it should therefore make no difference to us what standing our wronged fellow-man may occupy in regard to ourselves. Having made reparation, it will next be necessary to obtain his forgiveness, if even we should thereby be compelled to humble ourselves; and let not the advice of our pride ever prevent us from complying in this particular with the requisitions of religion; and this part of repentance becomes the more necessary if we should be unable to make reparation in kind. But in case our offended friend be no longer in life, or if the offence be one only between our God and ourselves, the repentance due to Heaven should, nevertheless, not consist in a mere repentance of the heart alone. Acts, too, should in this case, as well as in the preceding, declare our sincerity; and although to make a public show under ordinary circumstances would be inexpedient, yet it is necessary that the acts of religion and the inward penitence should become manifest enough to others, to prove that a reformation has taken place in the mind of the sinner. And oh, let no man be restrained from following this course because of the taunts of the irreligious world, or from fear of being thought insincere; nor let him be deterred by the difficulties of a thorough reformation; but let him proceed, under whatever disadvantages he may labour, and he may safely trust that the positive determination to brave all for the sake of his God, will cause the work to be of much easier accomplishment than he may himself imagine; and let him be mindful of the just advice contained in the saying of the rabbies: "Whoever comes to purify himself will be assisted from heaven!" At the same time if the sinner wishes to be forgiven, he must take especial care that his repentance consist not merely in one act of reformation;

but as soon as he begins his return to God he must leave his evil ways entirely, and endeavour to forget his having been accustomed to sin; and as his life has during his season of wickedness been rendered miserable, because he had not the peace of God, he should strive with all his energy so to live henceforward as to possess this all-valuable privilege of the righteous. And if this privilege be once more reobtained, how sweetly will all nature smile again; if even the tears of repentance should then bedew thy cheek; if even the burning of shame should now and then assail thy heart, returning brother! thy peace with thy God will have been restored. The sufferings thou wilt meet with will then appear the chastisements of Mercy, sent to purify thee from former pollution, and in place of former restlessness of spirit thou wilt have mental quietness; and in place of the hatred thou once didst feel for thy species, love and compassion will reign in thy breast; and in place of stubborn resistance to the will of God, thou wilt submit to his just decrees with meekness and cheerful resignation!

A reformation which is to effect this is the one designated by the law and prophets as the true offering to the Deity, and this is the contrite spirit which God will never despise.—Let us then unite, brethren, at this season appointed by our religion as the time emphatically devoted to repentance, to seek again our Lord and his goodness; it may be that we shall be graciously accepted before Him; it may be that we shall obtain a commutation of the evil which may have been decreed against us, and be received in favour by the Source of all mercy and forgiveness! Now indeed is the favourable time! We lately prayed here, in this house of God, to spare us in the midst of the pestilence which then was raging around us! Our prayer has been heard, and not one of our number has been taken away, and we are here again to thank the Lord for all his goodness! But how shall we thank Him? No words can express the gratitude we should feel! Many of us have been afflicted with the pestilence which has slain its myriads; but none have been removed. What then but additional devotion can we offer, what else should we do, but to nerve ourselves to live more strictly in the ways of the Lord, than we have hitherto been accustomed to do? The observances of our religion, strict

though they be, slay no one, let that be borne in mind; and the little calls they may make upon our possessions and time, bear no proportion to the pains, and time, and wealth we bestow, one and all, upon our worldly pursuits.—Let us be more punctual as a body in attending at the house of God! Let me entreat you, brethren, in this perhaps my last address to you, to forget each of you the peculiar grievance he may have to complain of. I know that in a society like ours, where every man thinks himself, and in fact, is upon an equality with his brother, every man too deems himself of equal importance with the other, and imagines his advice deserves to be listened to with all due deference. I will admit that this should be so in part; yet this grants no one the right, either according to religion or common sense, to separate himself from the congregation; no one should deem his own grievance too great for forgiveness; since if this were so, how can we, any one, the best of us, hope for pardon from Heaven; we, who have all so grievously sinned? I may, though I hope not to do so, offend by my present remarks; but long since have I felt deeply in spirit for the loneliness which our place of worship presents! no one can imagine how much grief it must cause any sincere lover of his religion, to see so little true respect paid to the sacred edicts, which have been the admiration of the heathens even; to see how we, in this free country, where we are at liberty to worship our God, according to our holy faith, without molestation, show our stubbornness by seeking every pursuit but that of Heaven, frequent every place but the house of God! Brethren, this ought not to be; let us wipe this reproach from us; let it not be said, and said with truth, that the churches of other denominations are filled with attentive audiences, whilst our Synagogues are nearly empty! Why should this be? is not our faith as pure as the light of heaven? is not our form of worship highly impressive? is not our law as ancient as the descent upon Sinai? Let us throw off the burden of this stigma upon our name, let us be more united, and let each person contribute to the public benefit by his purse, as far as the means will allow with which God has blest him, and by personal attendance where it may be needed. Let not one of us all hold back his contribution, because of one silly reason or

other ; for be assured, brethren, that before God's judgment no fictitious excuses will avail aught, whatever the world may think of them here.

Since now we must all acknowledge, that we have been signally favoured, much more than our merits deserve : we should in an equal degree also be more inclined to religious feelings, more ready to be grateful to God for his kindness. I hope therefore that my words will have some weight, and let me entreat you all to pay for once something more than transient attention to my remarks. We have been spared, not one of our number has fallen : let us do our best to deserve God's protection for a longer period. Perhaps this may be the last year that many of us shall have the felicity to celebrate a Sabbath of Repentance, and to look forward for a Day of Atonement ; O let us not then madly hasten hence before the judgment of Heaven, with professions of religion on our lips, whilst in truth we do every thing to injure permanently the cause of our faith, by pulling down, almost literally, the walls of this sacred edifice.—One strong effort at union is all that is wanting to restore the proper respect and attendance at public worship, and let it not be said, that sordid interest or private pique prevented Jews from being united ; when we have in truth so much to be thankful for, that we ought to endeavour to deserve a little of the good we enjoy. In many other countries the Hebrew is oppressed and despised ; here he is upon an equality with other citizens, and is unmolested in the exercise of his religion. Yet in tyrannical countries the Jew has always been a true believer, and a zealot in his faith even to martyrdom ; let us then prove, that in a free country the Jew is no less zealous, no less animated with love of Heaven, although the rod of persecution no longer compels him to seek shelter from the sword of man under the protection of the Almighty.—For even here we are not raised beyond hope of succour from Him ! life is yet heir to thousands of ills, to numerous cares, to manifold vexations and disappointments ; and although free and citizens, we cannot expect to combat with these ills successfully without the helping hand of the Supreme Protector ! And then, besides being citizens of these free states, we are also members of the Jewish nation, the people chosen by God as

his peculiar treasure; and as such we have to take care, that we do not become commixed with the nations of the earth; for we have a glorious hope of a restoration to a land once our own, under a leader appointed by God to restore peace on earth, to judge with justice, and in whose days universal knowledge and universal liberty shall reign.—Further, we are children of salvation, but this salvation every one must earn for himself by virtue and piety, whilst in this life of probation! Then at last we are children of God, to whom as a Parent we owe filial obedience, and humble resignation as our Creator! As such then, as men free and untrammelled by oppression, as Jews, as children of salvation, and creatures of God, let us return to the Lord whom we have forsaken, and seek his forgiveness; so that we may be sealed in the book of everlasting life when the final decree is sealed in the heavenly tribunal.

O our Father in heaven! we thank Thee for the manifold blessings we enjoy; for the many mercies which we have undeservingly obtained from thy bounty. Humbly do we acknowledge that it was thy grace which protected us, thy providence which shielded us! We have, O Father, no offerings to bring for all this goodness, save the humble but sincere offering of truly grateful hearts! O shield us further by thy majesty; guard us henceforward, that we may not stumble; and enlighten our hearts, that we may see how injurious it is to leave thy ways, and how refreshing to live conformably to thy will. Let the light of thy countenance shine unto us while living on earth, and when we depart, O take us under the shadow of thy wings, to stay before thy throne everlastingly, in the brightness of thy omnipotence, in the felicity thou grantest to thy servants! Amen.

Tishry 4th. }  
 Sept. 28th. } 5593.

## DISCOURSE XXIV.

## THE ADVENT OF MESSIAH.

O LORD of the universe, to whom all power appertaineth, bless and protect thy people in their captivity, and guard their dispersions lest they fall a prey to their enemies, and hasten the time of their reunion on thy holy mountain. Amen!

## BRETHREN!

It is often asserted that we Israelites have no definite ideas of our religious doctrines, that the light of the Bible, although at first given to us, sheds no benignant ray into our minds; in short, it is boldly maintained that we grope in darkness, and are like the untutored infant in the midst of a collection of books, unable to profit by the stores of learning contained in them, because he has as yet not been taught to decipher their meaning. If by this and the like charges it is meant to be conveyed, that we are entirely unable to give as reasonable definitions of our tenets as other denominations: then is the charge utterly false, for we have those among us who, having deeply studied the pages of Sacred Writ, and whose researches having entered deeply into the legacies of divine wisdom, can and do publicly proclaim what are the duties which, as Jews, we owe to God. And can it be said, that the plain and obvious knowledge so richly spread forth in revelation speaks no longer in intelligible terms to our people? who will be bold enough to hazard the assertion, that those promises which, more than two thousand years ago, were held forth to inspire hope into the fainting spirit, to instil confidence into the wavering mind, now no longer breathe the holy inspiration, and the same refreshing invigoration which are inherent in the oracles of God?—But if we are accused of an indifference to religious instruction; if our adversaries assert that we are not such strict observers of the law as we should be; if we are told, that with the best

light we act as though we were in darkness : we must with shame confess the truth of these accusations ; for although instruction has been offered to us ever since the promulgation of the law, it is lamentable to see how few profit thereby ; how rarely it is that a public teacher will be listened to, how pleasant soever his instruction may be. And then, even if he be listened to, even if the people should come to hear him, how few go away resolved in their minds to profit by the lessons they have heard ; aye, we listen, we acknowledged the justness of the rebuke addressed to our consideration ; but we go away from the lecture as bad as we entered the place of worship ; and if even a virtuous resolution should have for a moment sprung up in our minds, we endeavour all in our power to suppress its incipient working and are well nigh ashamed, that even for a brief space of time we could find aught blameable in our course of life. Nay, we perhaps blame the teacher for his unjust severity in placing cases before us by which we were induced to apply the rules he laid down to ourselves, and upon second thoughts we imagine, that no part of the lecture could be justly applicable to our case ; and to be brief, we think, that although others might need instruction and reformation, it is not we who are among the number.—It is owing chiefly to these causes, to an overweening confidence in our virtue, and to an undue notion of our importance and wisdom, that we find so small a share of real religious feeling and a proper respect for teachers of religion among us. Hence it is that the world and its goods are so highly esteemed, and that many, very many, of our people pay but little attention to their immortal happiness. It is true, they see riches snatched away from the grey-headed man, who all his life has been the slave to avarice ; they behold the young and rich nurseling of pleasure borne to the grave : yet whilst poverty does not reach them, they dream not that penury may be their lot also one day ; and whilst they enjoy life and health, they place disease and death at so great a distance, that they appear not worth minding ! And call their attention to their last day, place before them the horrors of dissolution, and you will perhaps be ridiculed as a fanatic and your best admonitions answered by a laugh of derision!—Am I wrong in my remarks ? would to



God, that all our people were virtuous and fond of listening to instruction, and let me then be accused of speaking falsely and unjustly severe of them ; but whilst the facts are, as I have represented them, I must, if I speak at all, boldly express the truth, and let no one think that this truth is less mortifying to me than it is to any of my hearers ; for am I not too an Israelite? and are not the fault and the consequent shame mine as well as others'? But not through flattering ourselves can our moral state be improved, any more than the physician can cure his patient by encouraging him to indulge in those excesses which have deprived him of health.—It was owing to the belief, that all my admonitions were useless, belief do I say? I am wronging myself, to the absolute fact—that my several addresses had failed to draw our population to the house of God, that I had almost resolved never to address you again, believing that you did not wish to hear me speak to you' upon religious subjects. Understand me, I do not say, that I ever entertained the idea, that all were unwilling to hear me, for I am well convinced that there are some who always urged me to persevere ; neither should any one imagine that it was offended pride, in not receiving hearers enough, which counselled me to desist. No, although not indifferent to the approbation of those capable of judging, yet would I have willingly forgone all praise, would have gladly exposed myself to obloquy and hatred, if by so doing I could have advanced the cause of religion and induced a more regular attendance upon our holy worship !\* But failing in this, and discovering that sermons in the language of the country were not universally approved of ; I thought that, all things considered, it would be best not to trouble you any more to pay attention to my addresses, which some no doubt may also have thought an innovation in our worship, though in truth, it was first in our Synagogues and schools, as early as the days of the second, and perhaps too of the first temple, that religious instruction was publicly dis-

\* Several paragraphs of a private nature, and more immediately addressed to the congregation of this city, have been omitted, and the parts retained are published from no other motives, but that the reproof they contain is applicable to the inhabitants of other places as well as our own.

pensed, and it is from us, that a kindred faith, kindred so far as it rests for its tenets upon our Scriptures, has borrowed the custom. It was in accordance with these views, that I in my last discourse announced, that it might probably be the last; and do not think me inconsistent, that, with some of my views unchanged, I now again address you. No, it was not mortified pride which advised me to desist from my labours; nor is it caprice which induces me to resume them. I do yet, as I before did, doubt my ability to effect any good purpose; but I yield to the opinion of others, who have advised me to continue what I once have begun, and I shall, therefore, from time to time, so it be God's will to preserve me, give you my views on religious matters, as far as I know, or am acquainted with, the tenets of our belief. I do not aim at novelty; but all I shall endeavour to accomplish is, to claim your attention to your permanent concerns, which should from their importance claim at least an equal share with your worldly pursuits. Perhaps, I may not see any good arising from my endeavours, before my voice be silenced, my heart be stilled, by death; but there may, nay, I am almost confident there will, arise some one after me, who will be able to follow up with more certain success my humble beginning, and thus, although I may not live to see it here, I shall have in another state the satisfaction not to have striven in vain!—Having said thus much, which I conceived to be due both to you, brethren, and to me, permit me to draw your attention to one of the most important tenets of our belief, to wit, the Advent of the Messiah, and the restoration of the Israelites to their former land.—On this subject we read the following in the *fourth* chapter of Micah:

וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים יְהִיָה הַר בֵּית ה' נֶכּוֹן בְּרֹאשׁ  
הַהָרִים וְנִשְׂאָ הוּא מִגְּבְעוֹת וְנִהְרֹוּ עָלָיו עַמִּים: וְהָלְכוּ  
גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ לָכוּ וְנַעֲלָה אֵל הַר ה' וְאֵל בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי  
יַעֲקֹב וְיִוְרְנוּ מִדְּרָכָיו וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה  
וְדָבַר ה' מִירוּשָׁלַם: מִיכָה ד' א'—ב':

“And it shall come to pass at the end of days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared above the mountains; and it shall be

raised above the hills, and to it shall stream the nations. And many nations shall go and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for (says the prophet) from Zion out shall go the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Micah iv. 1-2.

In Isaiah (see the beginning of the eleventh chapter) we read :

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."—And further: "They shall not injure, nor shall they destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.—And it shall come to pass on that day, that the Lord will again display his power, to bring in the remnant of his people—and He will raise up a banner to the nations, and gather the exiles of Israel; and the dispersions of Judah He will assemble from the four corners of the earth!"

That the passages just cited relate to a time which has not yet been experienced, either by our or any other nation, cannot be denied; and whereas the words of Scripture have either come to pass or will eventually do so, we say, that we have either felt their fulfilment, or that we look forward to their eventual accomplishment. The first is knowledge, the latter is hope; and although we have no ocular evidence by which we can dive into the future, yet we can compare this future with the past, of which we have record in history, or appeal to our daily experience, which is the present, and consequently to us mortals the best of evidence. Now the question is: "What does past history or present experience teach concerning Scripture-promises? or, in other words, has any thing ever occurred which tended to verify Scripture-predictions, and are there any events now in progress to verify these predictions?"—To these questions we answer, that many predictions contained in the Bible have, in times gone by, seen their fulfilment, and as far as the present period is concerned, we also see the effects of these accomplishing events daily perpetuated. Not to multiply examples, let us refer to the admonitions contained in the books of Moses concerning our people.—They were there promised that they should enter the land of Canaan; but that the nature of their tenure should be, an exact obedience to the commandment contained in these books.—The event proved the truth of

the prediction. The Israelites entered Palestine and conquered it.—Long they lived within its boundaries, and no nation was able, during some periods of their history, to withstand their power, and yet they were but few in number, living on a narrow margin of the eastern termination of the Mediterranean Sea; what then, we ask, made them so strong? it was the power vouchsafed to them for obedience to the divine will.—Anon they trespassed—they were in truth tired of happiness—and followed the idolatrous course of other nations; again and again were they warned of the threatening danger, and they laughed at the voice of admonition; but the evil nevertheless came over them like a whirlwind, and they were swept from off the surface of their land, and fifty-two years of utter desolation saw not the foot of man or domestic beast treading the deserted highways of ruined Palestine.—But seventy years soon elapsed, and at their ending a small number of Jews, now no longer the united Israelites, returned to repossess their land, and again they dwelt therein; but not in that independence and national greatness which had been once theirs. A second time the temple was built, and the smoke of sacrifices was again seen to arise from the sacred altar! But wo! bloodthirstiness and disunion broke out among them, and the land, which should not be defiled by innocent blood, saw it shed in torrents; the brother murdered the brother at the foot of the altar, and in the courts of the temple the aged was slain! The Lord saw it, and his anger was kindled, and the ruthless foe destroyed all, and passed the plough over thy prostrate ruins, O sacred Jerusalem! He called thy name *Aelia*, he imagined thus to root out thy memory from our minds! but he was deceived, O holy city, residence of the Most High, and even desolate as thou yet art, thou hast seen that tyrant's empire subverted by hords of unheard of barbarians, whilst thou art even in ruins the holy place of many nations! In this manner was the prediction of our downfall accomplished; and what is more remarkable still is, that despite of this entire subversion of our state, our nation has not ceased to exist. Whatever interdicting our worship, slaughtering, burning and torturing could accomplish, has been tried by heathens, Nazarenes and Mahomedans; but yet all their toiling has been of no avail; for we have been promised,

that even in the land of our enemies we should not be utterly forsaken, as even there the Lord would still continue to be our Protector and our Father! It is to this *promised* supreme protection, not to any inherent obstinacy of our race, that we have hitherto continued a nation, undivided and unbroken, although dispersed over all lands, before the Lord. If then any one asks for a verification of Scriptural promises, we can point to our past history, and to our present experience, and if even we cannot convince the unbeliever of the absolute certainty of our hope, we believing Israelites have enough to uphold us in our faith under whatever sufferings it may please the Almighty to afflict us with.—Having premised thus much, we will now consider the promised future as absolutely certain and inevitable, as it is the decree and emanation of the same unending Being who before has promised, and fulfilled to the letter the promises He had made.—The future then, to which we confidently look, because it has been predicted, is the change which prophets have announced as to come over the nature of things in the social organization of mankind.—A time will come, when the Lord will raise up a Branch from the root of Jesse, who shall be the ruler of the Israelites, and in whose days universal peace and universal knowledge shall reign.—This prince, so raised up by the special interposition of God's providence, shall be endowed with the spirit of prophecy, and be as good as he shall be wise. To him justice shall be as it were a girdle, and "truth a belt," that is to say, strict and impartial justice shall be administered by him, since the wisdom which shall rest upon him is to be the special gift of Heaven, and therefore he will be incapable of erring. Besides this, peace shall be every where prevailing, and no nation will practise any longer the destructive arts of war, because the desire for aggrandizement and oppression, as well as the power of executing injustice, shall be removed.—Independently of all this, the outward and temporal tranquillity will be more than overbalanced by the spiritual renovation which is to take place. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," says the prophet, the law of the Most High will then indeed become the beacon-light to all nations; and thus many nations shall say: "Let us go to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us of his ways, and we

will walk in his paths.” And the people of Israel who have so long and so patiently endured all the contumely and the oppression for the sake of the holy and venerated law? they shall be gathered from amidst all the nations where they have been dispersed, and they shall be brought back to the land which God promised to Abraham when He made with him the covenant to give to him and to his descendants the land comprised between the Euphrates and the river of Egypt, a land which shall then be fruitful in the extreme, where famine shall be unknown, and where no wild beast nor poisonous reptile shall injure or destroy! And the temple at Jerusalem? it shall be rebuilt in more than its former splendour, and the walls then reared shall endure uninjured and unapproached by any foreign invader, for the Lord will be around them like a wall of fire!—Envy moreover shall be banished, and the divisions and quarrels which caused twice our banishment, shall be no more heard of; for the reason that oppression both internal and external must have ceased, when the anointed king, the Messiah of the Lord, shall reign on earth!—The foregoing is a summary of the many coinciding prophecies to be found in the Bible, and it will be seen, that the reign of the Messiah is to be one of good will to all men.—It would be out of place in a discourse to mix controversial matters, and to recite the opinions entertained by others respecting the prophecies cited above. To prove the correctness of our ideas were easily possible, but neither is this the place nor would it answer any good purpose to do so now. Enough, that our hopes are founded upon the evident and literal interpretation of the biblical text, and any other explanation is unworthy of the sacred oracles, where, if we but knew the exact meaning of the words, and if we were but certain to what the prophets alluded, when they spoke to a nation having a community of feelings and a peculiar mode of expression, we should never be at a loss to agree about the import of any sentence. But unfortunately, much has been lost in the lapse of so many centuries, and among so many and multifarious sufferings.—Yet much, nay, the greater part, is yet very evident, and where this is the case, where the words employed by the Bible are yet well understood, where the imagery employed requires no extraneous elucidation: there, even at this distance

of time and place, we need not seek for any interpretation, save what the words employed convey.—And the passages relating to the Messiah are for the most part of this obvious and self-evident nature; and as the promises made there have as yet not been literally fulfilled, we say, that their accomplishment is yet to take place. Some one may ask: “By what means are we to distinguish the Messiah? how are we to ascertain that he is of the descendants of David, since the division of families rests no longer upon a sure foundation?”—To these and similar objections we reply: that whenever the true Messiah shall appear he will bring such evidences of his mission, that his truth will not be doubted; he will not come to be rejected, he will not come to be persecuted and executed like a malefactor; no, he is to be the Prince of Israel, the Shepherd David of God’s people; the righteous judge of the oppressed, and the arbiter of formerly contending nations. How he will verify his mission is not for us to inquire; but enough we know to say, that whenever he appears, his mission will be universally acknowledged, and his rule every where submitted to!—“When is the appointed time?” to this question we have to answer, that nowhere in the prophets is this with distinctness declared, on the contrary, such terms, as: At the end of days; at the time of the end; at the true end, are employed, to convey us an indefinite idea of the time of the advent. We then are in constant hope of the arrival of the period of universal peace and universal knowledge, and thus we have always before us the strongest incentive to virtue and repentance, for upon a sincere return to the Lord, we are taught, depends the acceleration of the time of the arrival of the Anointed.—But if we will not repent, we retard our and the world’s happiness till the time which Providence has set as the limit, beyond which the regeneration will not be delayed; and when it will be proved to all, that it was God who had afflicted Israel for their transgressions, and that it was for their sins, that He suffered them to linger so long in almost hopeless captivity. And then it will be seen, that God alone is King and Ruler of the universe, when He will return to Zion in glory, and for everlasting dwell in his temple at Jerusalem!

O Father of mercy! behold us now suffering and dispersed,

a scorn and derision to the nations! How long, O King, shall thy people mourn? how long shall they suffer the effects of thy anger? O guide and redeem them in thy unbounded grace; and plant them in the land of Israel, and be their King and Protector, as Thou hast spoken through thy prophets. Amen!

Kislev 14th. }  
December 6th. } 5593.

NOTE.—The subject of Messiah will be found treated more in detail, at the end of the second volume.

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## DISCOURSE XXV.

### THE INSTITUTION OF SACRIFICES.

O THOU who art exalted above all existing beings,—to whom the whole that is, is as nothing,—but who receivest in grace the acts of worship of the works of thy hands, receive us in favour when we approach Thee with prayer; and accept our humble offering when we devote our hearts and souls and our possessions to thy will! Amen!

#### BRETHREN!

When we survey the events of life, and investigate seriously the chain of circumstances which occurred since we entered into being: we will be struck with the remarkable fact, that amidst all our toiling we have rarely been able to accomplish any thing very remarkable, either for its wisdom or greatness. It is not, that some of us may not be as wise or as good as those, who have succeeded in doing mankind essential service, and who have raised to themselves, what we would call, lasting monuments of greatness; but solely because no opportunity for



display has offered itself to us.—Man, in fact, to distinguish himself, requires that the materials of greatness (if I may use the expression) should be laid abundantly within his reach, and all that the greatest master-mind is capable of doing is to fashion the materials thus given into something, by which either he or others may be aggrandized or benefitted. But then again, he cannot work by himself; for give a man ever so many opportunities he cannot do much, unless aided by others; since life is so short and health so uncertain, that nearly every undertaking must be left unfinished, if not many work simultaneously upon the same plan of action. If it were necessary, it were easily possible to prove this by the most isolated acts of greatness, accomplished by the greatest of mortals; but its evident truth, as a general rule, will obviate the necessity.—I speak not, however, of virtuous actions, of deeds of faith, but only of worldly affairs, where a man is not so much an individual, as a part of a general system, or in other words, a member of society.—It is in the latter capacity that he must fail of distinguishing himself, if he has not the opportunity given by being raised above the level of his fellows, since otherwise his acts will all be confined to himself, or his immediate connexions, and therefore apparently inoperative upon the general mass without.—Great acts, therefore, being difficult of accomplishment, and what is more, not being always useful: it would seem to follow, that it is inexpedient to be striving for their attainment. And in truth, as a general rule, it were best that no attention whatever should be paid towards attempting great things; for it is through these attempts, whether successful or unsuccessful, whether good or bad, that so much evil has been entailed upon mankind.—Besides, if only the truly virtuous and highly gifted were to undertake this task, but very little evil, comparatively speaking, would be the consequence; but the misfortune is, that so many bad and interested men scramble for greatness and notoriety, that hardly any thing but positive evil is the general consequence of the almost universal desire for distinction.

It is this knowledge of the utter inefficiency of all our best endeavours, which induced our wise men in many instances to counsel their hearers: “Try to keep thyself distant from

earthly greatness;" or, "He who pursues honour, will not attain her; she will fly from him."—"If then, we are not to be ambitious," some one will ask, "what should be the aim of our life?" The answer is: if it were that we ourselves were perfect and unimproveable, our life would indeed be spent in uselessness, unless we attended to actions connected with the world; but, since we must, with the smallest share of penetration, discover, that we have always an object of attention within ourselves: we shall, if we set a proper value upon our improvement, have enough to do for the entire brief space of time which we are permitted to sojourn in this state of existence. And in the attention which we thus pay to ourselves, we may rest assured that we adopt the best means of improving ourselves and benefitting others; for if we weigh every act and thought we shall seldom, if we have correct knowledge, be led into error, and the nature of truth is so organized, that benefit and instruction must flow out of its contemplation as well as practice.—And since life's best efforts are, according to the foregoing exposition, to be directed to details more than to entire systems of action, it is that we have in our religion, revealed to us and to the world for our guidance and instruction, so many particular precepts, relating to the various stages of *private* life especially. It was the object of our Father, to educate, so to say, his children, that they might become worthy members of his family, and fit to inhabit the universal palace which He has opened for all the living, without distinguishing whether they be Israelites or gentiles, whether rich or poor, whether wise or foolish, whether powerful and exalted, or oppressed and humble. For in God's mansion the doors are always open, the entrance is only closed to the undeserving; as the price of admission to its pleasures is a virtuous life, according to the best endeavours, guided by the best knowledge a man may have received of his duties; and of him who has received much light, much virtue, according to his means, will be asked; and of the less instructed and less gifted less will be required.—It is, therefore, in the many small and apparently unimportant precepts which our law contains, that we discover the great wisdom of its institution, since the great acts are unattainable by most, but the minor observances are within the reach of all.

But unfortunately, although we have so many ways to make our Father graciously pleased with our conduct, too many hours pass away, even in the life of the best, without an especial regard to the holy dictates of religion ; too much time is spent in worldly occupation ; too much leisure is devoted to foolish amusement, so that with many the idea of self-improvement is hardly ever entertained. Again, success in life very often calls forth all the latent germs of pride and self-sufficiency, places before its victim the greatest notion of his own greatness, and excludes all thoughts of superiority even in his Maker.—And escapes from dangers too, are then but another incentive to vaunting, as though success in one's undertakings and escapes from difficulties are the fruits and the necessary consequences of human foresight and of a mortal's exertions !—And if a man has those ideas of pride and obstinacy once engrafted on his mind, he will step carelessly, as it were, over the course of life, and heedless of false paths, will hurry on to the goal of his existence, regardless if he has missed the aim of his existence or not.—The reason is obvious ; he has confidence in his good intentions and prudence, and as he regards not what others say or think, he must remain unimproved or perhaps retrograde, hourly, from the point of eminence he may have attained ; and every one at last must discover, that the man, whom during the brilliancy of a successful career we were apt to regard as wise and superior, has ultimately left us no reason to desire, that we might be like him. For though his actions may have savoured of earthly wisdom, and apparently gilded his very words with a specious reasonableness : we will, upon closer investigation, discover, that he has been the prey of ambition, and been tormented by insatiable desires at those very moments, when his outward appearance denoted nothing but calmness to the careless beholder.—But religion was bestowed upon us, that we might watch ourselves ; and besides that we should endeavour to be free from the blame of the wise and the good, we should also be able to hold up the mirror of God, his holy law, to our own souls, and thereby discover, if it be all right within, if all our deeds can be as well defended upon true and solid grounds, as they may seem right to others. The oftener now we institute this inquiry, the oftener we take this view into our natures,

the more apt we must be, of necessity, to discover the errors we may have committed, and rectify them.—Now the greatest instruments we have to accomplish this change in our sentiments, are regret and gratitude ; for the former will teach us, that there is something unworthy in offending ; and the latter, that benefits received demand some return on our part. It is to these considerations, that we can refer the entire system and arrangement of the sacrifices, which we were commanded to bring to the temple of God on certain occasions.—We read in Leviticus v. 5 :

וְהָיָה כִּי יֵאָשֵׁם לְאָחַת מֵאֱלֹהֵי וְהִתּוֹדָה אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עָלֶיהָ  
וְהֵבִיא אֶת אֲשֵׁמוֹ לֵה' עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא : וּקְרָא ה' ה' :

“ And it shall come to pass, when he discovers the sin he has committed by doing any one of these, he shall confess the sin he has done ; and bring his offering to the Lord for the sin he has sinned.”

In this announcement of the institution of the offering for guilt, we are also, at once, shown the object of the ordinance. “ And he shall confess the sin he has done ;” not with careless inattention shall man present himself before the altar—not with an outward present, but inward obstinacy dare he approach ;—no ; the first step is, he must confess his sins ! Not before a man is he to relate the category of his misdeeds ; not clothe himself with sackcloth (although both may be at times useful, when one is done to obtain advice, and the other to promote contrition)—he need not exhibit his feelings to the eyes of men as fallible as himself ; but before his God he shall pour out his heart, to the Almighty he must tell what the greatness of his evil has been ; for to Him he cannot offer extenuations of his conduct, nor can he endeavour to conceal the smallest minutia even of all his thoughts. Having thus fortified himself in *regret* he shall bring his offering, an animal free from fault, a bird, or even a handful of flour, if this be all his means can afford, to the priest, and have it sacrificed according to the dictates of the law in atonement for the wrong he has done.—Let us for a moment advert to the solemnity of the occasion. A sinner’s own reflections or the admonitions of his fellow-beings, have awakened in him a consciousness of the wrong with

which he has burdened his soul. Remorse seizes him—day and night he is agitated by the consciousness of the nothingness of his imagined exalted station—and the rest that is denied him, when he reflects upon the oppression the labourer, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger have received at his guilty hands, he now seeks to find in the religion which he has hitherto neglected. He reads the Word, and he is told, that confession, restitution, and amendment are the means of forgiveness ; and behold him then pouring out his anguished spirit in sincere prayer ; again he visits the humble roof of the labourer, and gives him the wages which he has unlawfully detained from him ; he shares the riches which he enjoys, with the widow and the orphan he has oppressed ; and thus prepared, he leads to the courts of God his sin-offering. Again, the fire is kindled upon the altar ; the offerer lays his hand upon the head of the victim, and while its blood is spilt, he imagines : “ Thus did I deserve to die for my crimes ; but the Merciful One has given me an opportunity to regain the happiness I have lost by means of the sacrifice which He receives at my hands.” The song is chaunted by the singers of the temple, the priest arranges the fat upon the altar, and the multitude rejoice at the return of another member to the fraternity of the pious ; but this is nothing compared to the new affection for himself, his God, and the law awakened in the mind of the offerer, who with a holy zeal newly rekindled, with love for mankind again revived in him, now returns home, a more cheerful and more contented man, a new blessing to his children and an example for others to do likewise, and regain like him the happiness which haply their folly has snatched from their grasp.

If regret can have this beneficial influence upon man, the other principle, which has been mentioned, *gratitude*, can and should have a similar effect.—Man has tilled the field, and entrusted his seed to the fertile bosom of the earth. He has completed his share of the task, for producing the bread which is to nourish him. But what is his labour, if the Lord sendeth not the rain and the dew to fertilize the ground ? Or, if this blessing should come down too abundantly, where is the husbandman to obtain the blessed light of the sun to ripen his

fruit? But it is our Protector in heaven, who tempereth sunshine with rain, and thereby bestows sustenance to the expecting children of man; for through his means the fields are clothed with verdure—through his blessing the grain is filled with nutritious matter—and by his provident care the animals of the field are clothed with fatness.—The labourer seeing all his endeavours blessed, with a cheerful heart follows the richly loaded wagons that bear home the abundance of food which he is enabled to lay up for the winter's store; and having finished his annual task, he cannot help reflecting how much he owes to God, how utterly useless would his toil have been, if his humble means had not been assisted from a Superior Source.—The festivals of the Lord approach, and they who fear Him hasten to the temple, and there bring their peace-offerings—offered through the exuberance of grateful feelings which animate them: and one excites the other to deserve henceforward, yet oftener, and still greater benefits from the Giver of all good!

Led by love for riches, or the desire to see foreign lands, behold the adventurous one traversing pathless deserts, and braving the dangers of the waterless wilderness. In the midst of thirst and hunger, nothing but destruction seems to await him: and even the hope of God's assistance is almost wrenched from him by silent despair. But lo! amidst desolation the mercy of the Almighty is displayed, and the exhausted traveller reaches his own loved home; and publicly he now declares the mercy which has been vouchsafed him; he brings his sacrifice of thanksgiving to the temple, and whilst narrating to the assembled guests the unmerited favours he has received, he resolves to be for the future more obedient to the precepts of God, which are more refreshing to the afflicted soul, than the spring of pure water in the wilderness is to the tongue of man.—He also, who had been thrown on the bed of sickness; and he, who had languished in prison, separated for his crimes, or by the malice of enemies from his kindred and friends; as also he, who had seen the glories of the Creator displayed upon the vast and mighty ocean,—all in fact, who had been snatched from imminent danger, were bound to bring, in acknowledgment of their debt of gratitude, a present to the sanctuary of God, and publicly declare the goodness which had been

bestowed on them.—These, briefly, were the objects of the sacrifices. They were not intended to induce people to get rid of their sins by killing a guiltless animal ; no such senseless idea lays at the foundation of this part of the law. As I have said : for sins committed unwittingly and heedlessly, for violence done to the property of another, which could not be considered as theft, the sin and trespass-offerings were instituted ; but sincere repentance and reparation of the evil done were imperiously demanded before the sacrifice could be received. Of the offerings dictated by gratitude nothing more need be said in illustration than has been mentioned already, since their good tendency must be apparent to any one that seriously thinks.—That bloody sacrifices are expedient cannot be denied ; for since we are permitted to, and daily do, make use of animals for food, is it not entirely consonant with reason to devote them also to the service of Heaven, at the same time, that we make use of them for ourselves ? And as has been said already, it was not the mere sacrifice, but the idea which accompanied it, which could render it, according to our law, an acceptable offering.—But, brethren, since the temple has been laid waste by our adversaries, the sacrifices have ceased, for only on the site of the temple can they be brought ; no longer the consecrated priest administers the burnt-offerings, and the song of the Levite is hushed in the ruined halls of the holy temple.—But let it not be said, that because the outward symbols have ceased to be, that regret and gratitude have no longer their full influence on our hearts ! No, let us, each and all, demonstrate by the careful attention we pay to our conduct that we feel poignant sorrow when we have transgressed ; and that for every act of grace we are grateful ; and that we are fearful of offending and ready to obey our everkind Father. If thus we are animated, our life, be it ever so humble, must be a series of blessings to ourselves, and to all around us ; and if we then even occasionally transgress (since no man is perfect) we are assured, that the forgiveness which we crave will not be denied to our prayers.—And if, then, no distinction await us on earth—if the selfish of the world will not listen to our advice—if even we see the wicked lord it as masters : we should submit to this dispensation with patience and cheerful-

ness, and reflect that not this life is the entire time which our immortal soul is destined to endure.—And then again, if we but reflect, how short a time man can enjoy all sublunary good—how many times the greatest earthly pleasures are interrupted by sorrow—and how little security there is in their possession—and besides how soon the man, who is praised to-day by the public, is despised and sunk in oblivion—and how futile all fame is : we must be easily reconciled to the humble lot, which we, in common with the immense number of those unknown to fame and riches, have received as our sphere of action. For the time will come, when the glory of the great must vanish—when the wisdom of the wise will cease—when the power of the rulers will be broken : when they, together with their humblest menials, must all appear before the impartial Judge, before whom neither glory, nor wisdom, nor power will be taken as an excuse for righteousness outraged or virtue slighted ; and where the beggar will be preferred, provided his life has been virtuous and useful, according to his means.—Let it be therefore our constant study, to train our hearts to obedience, and let us never neglect to listen to the holy monitors, which God has planted within us—regret and gratitude ; but if we listen to their admonition, and offer a contrite spirit to our Maker, we may be assured, that our sins will be forgiven, and that we shall be graciously received by Him, who promised through his prophet, that the time shall come, when the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be as acceptable to Him as in times of old. May this be his will, and may our eyes speedily see the accomplishment. Amen.

Nissan 8th. }  
 March 28th. } 5593.



## DISCOURSE XXVI.

## THE SINFULNESS OF PRIDE.

O GOD of everlasting! teach us thy ways and fill our hearts with knowledge of Thee and thy wonderful works; so that adoration of Thee may follow the consciousness in us of thy might and wisdom. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

You have so often been struck with the remarkable fact, that persons who to all appearance have the same opportunity of forming an opinion, will take views so entirely varying of the same subject; and that others, apparently possessed of the same talents have acquired tastes so very differing, and pursue at times such opposite and contradictory lines of conduct, as almost to baffle and surprise you. But upon a closer investigation of the springs of action, we shall discover the reason of the first mentioned case to be, that those who are to form a judgment, have not been all taught alike, and do not possess the same degree of information; and of the second, that those equally endowed with reasoning powers do not regard things from the same point of view; and consequently seeing, as it were, the moral world from different positions, they each form a different idea of the objects placed within their intellectual horizon. This also will account for the difference discoverable in the degrees of moral improvement or piety, which we meet with amongst the children of man. If all were equally well informed, and if all would give their mind the same direction, there would be a perfect unanimity of opinion amongst all men. There would then be no different sects, and every one of the universal religion would act as the most distant from him in time or space could do. Because, since actions are in sound minds the results of thought, and since thought is the effect of information: all consequences of thought or information would in this case be the same, since the source of them

would then be of equal extent and equal usefulness in all thinking beings; that is to say, men would all be virtuous alike, because they must then be acting from an equal degree of knowledge, and from an application of this knowledge to the same purposes.—Now, although it is true that the thoughts of men cannot be seen, still, as their effects are visible, we can determine almost to a certainty the current of ideas in most persons; for, since *actions* are bad or good, useful or injurious, we may safely conclude, that the thoughts of the agents also are of the same nature; and consequently that those who act well are governed by good thoughts, and the doers of evil are moved by a bad train of thinking.

This view brings us at once to the reflection, that if we wish to cultivate the duties of religion, it is of the utmost importance to us to know, which train of thought is the promoter of religious conduct, and which is calculated to abstract us from a pious life. Let me premise, that no reflections in ourselves and admonitions from others, although they may at first sight appear to conduce to what is commonly termed moral improvement only, can be considered as not properly belonging to practical religious instruction: if their tendency is to improve the mind, and to fertilize it for the reception of the seed, which is to be derived much better from the oracles of God themselves, when aided by previous information and attentive study, than by lectures and exhortations from even the most gifted. These should, therefore, be chiefly directed to remove every objection to our holy religion, with which impiety and ignorance may endeavour to entrap the unwary, or which self-interest or passion may frame as excuses to lull a disturbed conscience into security. To say something very surprising, or to advance new ideas on a subject of the nature of immutable religion, would be evidently improper, even if it were possible since any thing not before heard of, or not previously acquiesced in, must be an innovation attempted to be engrafted on the rule of faith, and which would at once stamp doctrines thus advanced with the seal of falsehood; and to treat of ceremonies and laws in a lecture, which is to be heard but once, can also have no very beneficial tendency, since nothing is easier, than that the hearers may not understand very accurately the

instructions of the speaker, or may recollect them but imperfectly.—All, therefore, which remains properly as the province of oral and public instruction, is to endeavour by rational and clear expositions of the nature of religion to call the attention of the hearers to the subject, and to answer those objections which a person may have made himself or heard made by others, or even those which may never have yet been urged; and lastly, to place in a clear light the great and overwhelming reasonableness which the law has beyond any emanations of a mortal's wisdom; and thus endeavour to induce others to study with more diligence, and with a mind better prepared for such a study, the Scriptures of the Lord. It is not, believe me, brethren, from ignorance that we sin, although we may at times flatter our vanity with so silly an excuse, as from want of proper training. It is true, we may not know every particular iota of religious duties; it may be that we are not fully aware of the extent of the sacrifices demanded of us, but we may, nevertheless, avoid even in these instances doing unconsciously wrong, if we keep within the limits of what is allowed us, and not assume for ourselves too much liberty of range in departing from what many of us may perhaps think the too minute observances of the ignorant and superstitious of a former age. We should be careful not to disregard all, because we cannot respect all; and upon the whole, rather mistrust our judgment than our information, and rather do many an unimportant action, than by too great stickling for the *reason of all* omit doing that which may be very important, although we may not so conceive it.

With these general admonitions prefaced, let us recur to the subject which I first introduced for this day's reflection.—I said, that it is absolutely necessary for the religious man to have a good train of thoughts and feelings as the basis of his actions; for without this first requisite, virtue is but another name for hypocrisy, and piety but the cloak of wickedness.—On this subject, as well as on every other connected with our moral improvement, we find wholesome advice in the holy Scriptures, and upon referring to them, we will at all times find the best guide we can desire to lead us through life.—Now, of all the good habits which are commended in the Bible, meekness

is the most prominent, and pride, on the other hand, is always held up as that species of feeling we should above all endeavour to avoid.—We read in the book of Proverbs xvi. 4 :

תועבת ה' כל גבה לב : משלי יו' ד' :

“ All pride is an abomination of the Lord.”

If then, we wish not to deserve the displeasure of our God, we should strive to eradicate this enēmy of our improvement, this pride, from our hearts, and never suffer it to obtain the dominion over our feelings.—“ But why is pride so destructive? why is religion incompatible with arrogance?”—We answer: When God created men, He ordained to them the same origin and the same felicity. It was through sin that they forfeited this felicity, and then a uniform termination of life, or death of the body, was decreed against all descendants of the first sinners.—In thus far, then, no man has a right to assume any superiority over another; and humility, which is the proper knowledge of one's self, will lead its possessor to regard all men as brothers, who are, if even dependent upon him, nevertheless, of the same beginning, and a similar ending. But pride will lead a man to forget that his beginning is the same with that of the most degraded, and that the same fate awaits him, which is appointed for all the descendants of Adam. Let us now rapidly follow the proud man through his career, and see what this forgetfulness will lead to.—In childhood, alas ! pride often shows itself already, and the infant, corrupted by flattery, will spurn the caresses of his nurse as though the touch of her, by whose care his life has perhaps been prolonged, were contaminating to him, one, who is descended from a noble line of ancestry, noble perhaps in their being distinguished for the perseverance with which they indulged in foolish pleasures, and their subserviency to unjust power. Ridiculous as the exhibition of pride is at so early an age, and obvious as the folly thereof is to every beholder: children are too often countenanced by their parents in such a line of conduct, for they encourage very often rather than check this early growth of presumption.—In boyhood the seeds of pride continue to produce their legitimate fruit, and the once petulant child shows all the perverseness of

the overbearing boy; and the advice of the teacher is received with a frown; his instruction is regarded as the proper appendage of the pedagogue, which the noble and rich scholar need not acquire; and thus the ideas of self-sufficiency, early imbibed, are still stronger confirmed, and the boy attains the age of youth with a heart scoffing at all that are imagined inferior to the greatness of this proud stripling, and with a mind not sufficiently, or perhaps altogether unprepared to contend with the temptations which beset the path of life. He now seeks the gaieties and amusements which he conceives to be the proper province of his exalted rank; habit has already taught him to regard wealth and fictitious greatness as the chief glories of life; and he, therefore, now utterly abhors those whose means or opportunities allow them not to partake of the same enjoyments; and he will hate those who may be above him in those accomplishments, trifling elegancies, and wealth which he so much adores.—He now seeks to outstrip all in the search of refined fooleries, he stops short at no obstacles, and he toils and watches in *these* endeavours much more than the philanthropist in *his* exertions.—Vice too will be courted, provided it can bring the perpetrator a name of a dashing, bold fellow; and the greater the extravagance, and yea, the greater the meanness of the deed, the greater will he conceive to be the glory he has earned by his labours. All this time admonition dares not to be addressed to his sensitive ears; he is too wise in his own conceit, too much trusting to his own wild judgment. And if even something of that careless generosity, which men of pleasure sometimes possess, should occasionally be displayed, some heroic devotion to the interest of mankind, some bold exposure to danger to save the life of a perishing fellow-being: we should, nevertheless, not imagine that the exhibition of these occasional virtues are the signs of a reformation or legitimate fruits of the system our proud voluptuary pursues. Neither is the case. But the most depraved has a human heart, his soul is of the same pure origin as that of the most pious, and no course of vice can ever entirely destroy the sacred principle of righteousness; and thus a man like the one we are speaking of may be radically bad, and practise at times acts of great devotion to the interests of suffering mankind, without reform-

ing, and despite of his otherwise wicked course.—Besides, occasional goodness will give a further zest to pleasures, which will be more enjoyed, because of a temporary interruption.—But pleasure must sooner or later become intolerable, as the sole pursuit of any one but little removed above the idiot; and the proud devotee of worldly enjoyment, therefore, will occasionally seek some other occupation. Suppose him now in a high office, see him honoured by his country on account of the influence which his wealth and rank naturally confer upon him; and assume again, which is highly probable, that his occupation has been changed without any improvement in the unhealthy state of his neglected mind. He is merged in multifarious employments, and to his heart's delight he can tyrannize over some others besides his own personal dependants. They who have to ask favours of the official are received with haughty scorn; and wo to those who have not carefully studied his disposition, if upon him should depend their success or failure. He will endeavour to crush those who have not sufficiently valued his importance; and the greater the misfortune he can cause the greater will be his delight, particularly if moroseness and disappointment should have followed in the wake of the indulgencies of pleasure, and the acquisition of power.—Or place him at the head of national affairs, and uncontrolled by the will of others; how terrible will then be the effects of pride, and how soon will misery follow the train of the tyrant, who may conceive his dignity injured by the insolence of any of his subjects! You must admit him the best musician, the best gladiator, or the best of horse-racers, or your life is in danger; you must yield your paternal inheritance to swell his pleasure-gardens, or else death awaits you; and if you even should commit the offence beyond the limits of his dominions he will hire the assassin's steel to remove the hated object from the earth. No entreaty, no reasonable exposition of the madness of such proceedings can convince one so much raised in his own conceit above the opinion of others; and not till a natural death stares him in the face, or till perhaps he receives a fatal blow from the dagger of some wretch rendered desperate by oppression, will the tyrant be led to a consciousness of his folly, which might have been

done a thousand times, if he had not been blinded by pride.—If it be urged that examples like the foregoing are too rare, and too remote for the attainment of persons in the ordinary circumstances of life: it would nevertheless be perfectly just to exhibit the natural consequences of a passion, which when carried out to its full extent can lead to such deplorable results. But we need not go so far, since unfortunately the evil effects of pride are too abundant in all relations of our earthly existence. Many a man has been devoted to a righteous life, whilst he toiled from day to day to obtain food for himself and his family. A sudden, or even gradual, change of circumstances places him in a more elevated situation; wealth pours into his coffers, and he sees himself regarded for the sake of his riches by those whom he at one time conceived so much above him. He is pleased with himself, and he says: “My industry, my ingenuity, and my prudence, have caused all this;” and in consequence of this favourable judgment of his own powers he begins to despise his former associates, and learns by degrees to forget his formerly entertained opinions. He is ashamed of his family connections, they are now too humble to be acknowledged by him; and his new-born importance seeks other objects of action than deeds of piety. For why should he, the wise, the rich, the great, abide by those rules which the foolish, the poor, the humble follow? At first he begins by omitting minor observances, but ultimately the chief commandments too find no longer obedience in him, and he appears to one who knew him in poverty, as an entirely changed man. And what changed him? what caused him to forget his old friends? what induced him to forsake his God? It is not the acquisition of riches, but the counsel of overweening pride which caused all this.—Another man has been used to riches, ease, and affluence; but as all earthly things are changeable, so he too meets with a change in his circumstances, and the wealth, which he thought too great to be dissipated by any event whatever, takes wing, as it were, and leaves him in penury. He had always, whilst rich, thought himself above the working classes, of a somewhat superior clay to those who toil for a living; and shall he descend to their level? no, he cannot do this; idleness will not support him, so he resorts to beggary, swindling, and per-

haps highway robbery ; and when confined at last in a dungeon for his trespasses, he mourns over the weakness which he would not conquer, and which prevented him from being a hard-working but honest member of society.

Another, again, has descended into the depth of learning, he has searched into the mysteries of creation, has ascended in his imagination to the pinnacles of the starry heaven, and his researches have been admired by friends and strangers. No longer can he, who once moralized over the ambition of mankind and ridiculed their vain pursuits, resist the allurements of pride ; he finds in himself a soul of nobler materials, and the admiration which is bestowed on him he conceives to be but a poor return for the great benefits which his discoveries have conferred on the world. He forgets his mortality ; he strives to establish a system of morals of his own ; he no longer needs the law of Moses to guide *him* who is so much wiser than the great king of Israel ; and the support of revelation being once taken from under his feet he tumbles headlong into the abyss of ruin, and in sudden leaps he hastens down to the gulph of destruction, and herds there with the foolish and the proud of all classes, a warning monument of the weakness of unsupported human intellect, and the unsubstantiality of a mortal's greatness ; and when his eye catches a glimpse of death, he perhaps then feels the full effects of a wise man's folly ; he calls upon a mortal to prolong his life, he will not believe that he must at length die, and leave his name behind him as a curse and by-word, and his memory to be despised by those whom his sophistry dragged along with him into the stream of unbelief and perdition.—Therefore, says the Bible: “Every one proud of heart is an abomination to the Lord.” And no matter how pride is exhibited, if it be by the king on his throne or the lazy mendicant in the street, it is alike an abomination. And if a man but reflects on the great glory of God, on his omnipotent power, on his all-searching wisdom : he must become ashamed at setting up for himself claims of superior excellence. Whatever of greatness, ease, and wisdom is vouchsafed to us, is a gift, or rather a loan, to be demanded back at the pleasure of God. For our greatness at its very acmé is often rendered to nought ; our ease may be momentarily dis-



turbed by pain ; and the very excess of wisdom may produce aberration of intellect. And God has given us in the Bible so many instances of the punishment of the arrogant, and besides, daily experience teaches us the lessons of Scripture over and over again : that nothing but wilful blindness can prevent us from benefitting by those lessons. The Bible speaks of a Pharaoh and of a Sanherib, kings, who in their might almost thought themselves gods and unconquerable ; but one was drowned in the Red Sea, and the other returned from an attempted conquest a fugitive to his own land.—Then we have the example of a Haman, who for the sake of offended pride strove to exterminate the descendants of Jacob ; and a Korah, who wanted to supplant the pious Moses : but one was removed by a supernatural punishment ; the other expired on the gibbet, which he had prepared for the righteous Mordecai ! Then we read of the proud Nabal, who in private life was ungrateful from pride ; and God removed him, so as not to be a stumbling block to others. But what needs it to multiply examples to prove both the dangerous tendencies and the terrible consequences of pride and arrogance ?—Parents, therefore, you who would delight in the welfare of your children, as you value your and their peace, watch with the utmost solicitude the early approach of this vice. Check it as soon as it manifests itself ; and by your encouraging the humble and lowly to enter your dwellings on terms of ease and good fellowship, if they are good and deserving : teach them early, that those not as much favoured with worldly gifts are nevertheless of the same class of beings, and deserving of the same regard as the wealthy.—Above all, allow them never to tyrannize over domestics, for a small beginning though it may be, it may have a terrible ending.—Youths and maidens, you who have just entered life's busy scenes, beware of the snare that lies hidden at your feet. If you feel your station as something so very delightful, and your society as something superior to others : check at once the presumption which is almost sure to follow such ideas, and oh, believe not that the garment makes the man, or that fashionable pursuits exalt you above him who has no time to devote to such employments !—Husbands and wives, ye too must guard your hearts ! If success has crowned your exertions, if your children

grow up around you in health and beauty, imagine not that your exertions were anything else than the means in the hands of God to bestow blessings upon you. Humble, therefore, your hearts to the Giver of all, that He may continue to you his goodness, and instruct your children to revere Him, the Father of all!—And thou too, man of learning, bend thy ear to the admonition of God! Thou hast received wisdom above thy fellow-men, much more has been made known to thee than to others; strive therefore too to glorify the name of thy Benefactor; instruct the ignorant in his law, and lead all to adore our God, who has made all with so much wisdom!—If, brethren, we always think in this manner, if we constantly guard the avenues of our hearts against the approach of pride: we may rest assured that we shall not soon be led into the snares of sin; for when we humbly seek to know God and his ways, we must naturally be watchful over our conduct; and if we be rich then we will bear our fortune with humility; and if poor we will cheerfully follow those pursuits by which we can maintain an honest name, without in the first case being buoyed up by arrogance, or in the other checked by pride.—And how lovely fruits must the law of God bear in the heart thus cultivated, and how sweet will the harvest be when the labour of life has terminated! “The humble shall inherit the land,” says the Lord, and to those who look upon themselves and all as the children of One God, the law must always be dear, and happiness and peace will crown their efforts much more than even their most excited hope dared to expect in this state of existence!

O God, who lookest upon the contrite heart and humble spirit, receive our prayer, and guard us from all evil, for the sake of thy holy name! Amen.

Iyar 14th. }  
 May 3d. } 5593.

## DISCOURSE XXVII.

## MOTIVES OF GRATITUDE.

GOD of glory, to Thee we raise our eyes in hope of thy assistance ; O save us now, from the evils to which our mortal career is subject ; and let the light of thy countenance shine unto us, as Thou once didst unto our forefathers, when Thou didst appear unto them in clouds of brightness, and gavest them thy pure and holy law, for their guidance unto happiness. May it now be thy will to protect us in our captivity, and cause not thy holy name to be profaned among the nations, and let not our enemies exult over our misfortunes, lest they should say in the pride of their hearts : “ Where is their God ? ” But Thou, our God, wilt not suffer thy children to perish, although they have sinned to Thee, and Thou hast promised not to cast them off, nor to abhor them utterly, if even their transgressions should be manifold !—O have mercy upon the lonely sheep of Jacob, and let thy chastisement be *only* directed to soften their hearts, and to open their eyes to the evil of their way ; so that led by the paternal hand, which Thou hast ever extended over them, they may return unto Thee with repentance in their inward souls, and become worthy of thy forgiveness, and to be called again : “ You are the people of the Lord.” Amen.

## BRETHREN !

Full often have we experienced the goodness of God. Already at the time when our ancestor Abraham was yet alone, the star shining in the East, and sending forth the rays of piety into a benighted world : did we experience in him, our progenitor, the kindness which the Lord bestoweth on his servants.—You are all, no doubt, sufficiently familiar with the history of Abraham, to understand me when I say, that the approbation, which was so miraculously vouchsafed to him was, in all human probability, the cause that the worship of God was

spread through the first preacher's means over a great portion of the primitive world. I do not wish to say, that any other method would have been impossible; for this would be circumscribing the power of the Almighty within the range of circumstances and casualties. But surely we may be permitted to believe that the grace given unto Abraham, and the evident favour this great apostle of righteousness enjoyed from on high, were, as far as we can judge, the best means of rivetting the attention of all mankind, and therefore the best adapted to impress upon them, how sweet it is to be a servant of the Being who had dealt so bountifully with his adorer.—Thus early chosen as the peculiar treasure of God, we shall find no diminution of kindness if we descend to later periods.—Isaac selected as a sacrifice, to try the faith of his loving father, and rescued by the messenger of Mercy, was blessed by God, and promised the assistance which his father had never found failing him in his hour of need.—Jacob fled from before the wrath of his brother, and wandered into a distant land for the safety he found not in his parental home.—And was he forsaken? not in the least; for even whilst reposing upon the hard rock, he received comfort in a dream; and the promise of God, first made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac, was renewed to him, and he was assured, that in his person and the persons of his descendants should the prophecies be fulfilled.—Refreshed by these marks of Supreme favour, he served for many years, as we read in the book of Genesis; but even in servitude he saw sufficient grounds for thankfulness. A numerous offspring grew up around him, all like their father, untainted by idolatry, and undefiled by the abominations of the heathen!—At length Jacob returned, but not to enjoy the ease of life, which his great acquired riches might perhaps have induced him to look for, as almost certain; for Providence had willed it, that he should go into Egypt, with his whole family, there to become the great nation, to whom the Lord would be God. Through the force of love Jacob was moved to wander thither in his old age; and he and his sons all departed from this life in the land of the children of Ham, fully impressed with the conviction, that the time would come when the Lord would lead the Israelites out of that land, into the inheritance which He had given unto

their ancestor, when He made with him a covenant, and commanded him "to walk before him and be perfect."—The time rolled on ; but the Egyptians had forgotten, that they owed much gratitude to the Hebrew Joseph, who by his Heaven-bestowed prudence, had saved the land from the desolation of famine; they weened that Israel would be dangerous to the peace of the state; they imagined, like tyrants of more modern times also have imagined, that the Hebrew could have no community of interest with his fellow-citizens; they therefore oppressed them with heavy labour, and all manner of work in the field, for the purpose of diminishing their number ! But the arm of the Lord interposed, and the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied, and the more they spread out. When at length the time of the redemption approached, a prophet and messenger were chosen, to apprise Mitzraim's king, that it was the will of the Eternal God, that he should dismiss the Israelites from his service. Pharaoh refused to obey; nay, he increased the burden of the enslaved till even hope had fled from the heart of Jacob's children. But then it was that the fearful arm of the Lord was bared over the devoted land of Egypt, till at length the oppressor relented, and permitted, under the weight of awful visitations, to let the tribes of Yeshurun leave his land in triumph.—They thus went forth into the wilderness, devoted to God, as the newly married bride is devoted to her husband, and passed through the Red Sea, secure from the pursuing host of the Egyptians, who were sunk into the abyss, through which the Israelites had passed in safety.—And when they wanted bread, it was given them every morning; and when they asked for water, it flowed for them out of the flinty rock.—Soon after they were brought to the foot of Sinai, to receive the law, which was to instruct them in the way they were to go, and the statutes and commandments they were to observe.—Having in this manner the way of life revealed unto them, it was to have been hoped, that obedience would have followed the knowledge of right; but it was not so. Misguided by fear, and yielding to inherited prejudices, they sacrificed to an idol, and called it the god who had conducted them out of Egypt. The ungrateful nation now deserved to be exterminated; but the Merciful withheld his

anger, forgave their sin and destroyed not, and poured not out all his wrath.—Again they sinned by murmuring against the promised land, and for a second time was the decree of destruction revoked; and by a wandering for forty years in the wilderness and the death of all those who had reached man's estate, when they left Egypt, the sin of ingratitude was expiated. They now entered the holy land, under the guidance of Moses's disciple Joshua; they drove out the former inhabitants, who had offended God by their wickedness, and dwelled in houses they had not built, drank out of cisterns which they had not hewn, and enjoyed all delightful products which they had not laid up themselves.—Here they might have lived a truly beloved people of God, an admiration to all nations, and a beacon-light to all inhabitants of the earth.—But they were led away by the free lives of the idolaters, the yoke of obedience to divine commands was too grievous for them to bear, and they stumbled upon the path of corruption.—But as they had been foretold, the punishment denounced speedily overtook them, and when oppressed by their enemies they soon discovered the difference between the effects of the service of Heaven and the results of subjection to men.—Whenever they repented, however, they were graciously received, and were, from time to time, saved through means of the judges, whom the Lord set up for them.—Thus elapsed many years, and Israel was upon the whole happy under the divine rule by which they were governed; till at length tired of the simplicity of their own pure government, they required a king to rule over them.—In this foolish demand they were gratified, and not alone this, but a wise and virtuous man was selected as their chief, who, whilst he sincerely adhered to his piety, was a blessing to the people. And when his conduct was such, as no longer to entitle him to the favour of God and confidence of men, he was told, that his kingdom should not endure, but should be given to a better man. This prince was David, of eight sons of Jesse the youngest, and at the time of his election the shepherd of his father's flock. To him, the poet, the warrior, the patriot, and the devoted servant of God, was the care of the Hebrew nation confided, and under him our kingdom rose to an indeed proud eminence.—It would be

foreign to our rapid sketch to dwell minutely upon David's history and to expatiate upon every single act of his life as given to us in the Bible. Suffice it to say, that for the few sins committed under the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, he displayed on every occasion so humble a resignation, so entire a reliance, and so contrite a hope for forgiveness upon God, that we cannot help admiring that man, who among kings of his time the greatest, of conquerors the most renowned, and of poets of all ages the sweetest and most sublime, never forgot, on any one occasion, his accountability to a Supreme Being, although true to human nature, he occasionally transgressed, aye, severely transgressed; and yet even here his example, although not to be imitated in sinning, is a guide to all sinners, yea, the greatest, to return like him, to be like him received, under chastisement, again into favour, when their repentance and contrition are sincere and heartfelt.

If Israel had under David's rule obtained martial power, their moral glory was no less advanced by the splendid efforts of Solomon's reign. The temple dedicated to the all-pervading but unseen God, rose noiselessly before the admiring world, and the splendour of the arrangements of the service, the enchanting sublimity of the choral songs, the thrill of the unrivalled music, awakened the attention of even distant nations, who now acknowledged, that there was a God in Israel exalted above all power, and more sublime than all thought, and to whom it, of right, belonged, that all should adore Him, and bring sacrifices to his footstool. Whoever now had the feelings of a man loving the community of which he was part, whose bosom glowed at the glory of his own native land, had at that period enough of cause for exultation, and abundant reason to thank God for the many blessings bestowed on his people.

Even after this period, when the splendour of our nation was eclipsed, when the kingdom, divided into two warring parties, became an easy prey for the invaders: we find, nevertheless, the kindness of our Lord displayed, who suffered not Israel and Judah to be led into captivity at the same moment, and permitted them not to be banished into one corner, lest they might be cut off through the malice of their enemies. So that

what we at first might consider as a curse, that is to say, our entire dispersion over all the earth, has in truth been our salvation. For when was it ever in the power of any one nation to harm us all at the same time? where was ever that universal monarchy which comprised the whole Jewish nation in its boundaries? The disposition to exterminate us has, alas! but seldom been wanting, but, thanks to our provident Father, who supplied the balsam before the wound was yet inflicted, the execution has ever been beyond the power and reach of any one people, or of all nations combined.

After the banishment consequent on the sin of our ancestors had endured for seventy years, God visited them in their captivity, and they were permitted to rebuild the temple of the Most High in Jerusalem.—The love for idols had by their captivity in Babylon been entirely exterminated, and we, therefore, find no indications during the existence of the second temple, that this sin was ever a general one among the Jews; and thus then they flourished, protected by God, and preserved a distinct people, although now truly a handful of men among nations, since the ten tribes who had been banished before the destruction of the first house never returned, and even many of the Jews also remained behind in the lands of their captors. Many a time, indeed, did heathens pour their numerous armies over Judea, forbade the religion of Heaven, and slaughtered the followers of a pure worship. But at no time during this whole period, and not even when the temple was again laid in ruins, and we were a second time scattered as the grains fall from a sieve, and were, so to say, encircled on all sides with envious and evil-wishers, was it left in the power of men to deprive us of our religion, the solace of our captivity, the comfort amidst all our sufferings.

It pleased God, on the day\* the recurrence of which we now celebrate, to raise us up to be unto Him as a people, more dearly beloved than all nations; and the intentions of God, the all-wise and all-good, cannot be frustrated by the feeble efforts of mortals.—And when on any one spot the burthen of persecution laid too heavy upon us, we always had a resting place

\* The Pentecost, the sixth of Sivan.



given us in another land; and if even it appeared that the sword was at any one time fully drawn to smite all, our adversaries were, in spite of themselves, induced to commiserate the fallen state of a people, made great by moral elevation, and upheld in olden times by the special favour of the Most High. This, brethren, is a brief view of the many mercies which it has been our lot to enjoy. It would be impossible to expatiate upon all the acts of grace, for they are too many for number, and even if we were to say all we know, we should yet be liable to the reproof of the wise Rabbi, who checked a man once with the question: "Hast thou finished all the praises of the Lord?" But enough has been said already to make it apparent to every one, that we, as Israelites, owe a peculiar debt of gratitude to our Creator.—If we now take a careful survey of all we have received, to see which is the greatest blessing: we shall come to the conclusion, that the promulgation of a revealed religion from Sinai was the chief good that has been bestowed on us. For what would have been the covenant with Abraham, if his descendants had not become more enlightened in the knowledge of God, than the other nations?—To what end would the redemption from Egypt and the entrance into Palestine have tended, but to drive out one pagan people to make room for another, equally corrupt and uninformed?—What would have all temporary assistance under affliction, and victories over enemies availed, if nothing but the martial shout of triumph or the acquisition of a new territory had resulted therefrom?—And what at least could have preserved our national existence, but the law of God?—Yes, brethren, this alone it is which made the covenant with Abraham effectual; this made the exodus from Egypt not merely an act of grace to one people, but to all nations of the world, although in consequence thereof, one nation of barbarous idolaters, given to the most revolting acts of cruelty in their pretended worship, had to be driven out from a land, the soil of which they had polluted by their enormities.—Again, if assistance against enemies and triumph over invaders were granted, they were only another shield to preserve the pure worship free from admixture of heathen rites.—And when at length we were banished from off the goodly land which the Lord had given us, we owed, and

still owe, our preservation to the doctrines of the faith, the observance of which compel us to be unlike other families, and render us a separate and distinct people.—We, therefore, find that all the prophets spoke of the law, not as a burden imposed, but as a benefit granted, and we are constantly admonished to preserve it inviolate and holy.—And thus spoke Malachi at the conclusion of his prophecy, and which also closes the books of the prophets :

זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר צויתי אותו בחרב על כל  
 ישראל חקים ומשפטים : מלאכי ג' כב' :

“Remember the law of Moses my servant, in which I have commanded him on Horeb statutes and judgments for all Israel.” Malachi iii. 22.

This law of Moses is indeed fit to be the law-book of an enlightened and virtuous people. It enjoins love for One great Creator and Preserver of all things; it commands good will and peace towards all men, and its object is to regulate the inclinations and passions of man, so that the consequence of our actions may be a holy and righteous life.—But, brethren, let each of us ask himself: “Have I so acted, as the law demands? Do I love my Creator? Am I at peace and on terms of good will with all men? Have I subjected my wishes, my thoughts, my endeavours, and my passions to the wholesome restraint of the divine will?” Wo! wo! that we can answer these questions so little satisfactorily to our immortal souls! The law says: “I am the Lord thy God!” and again: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”—Further: “After the Lord your God you shall walk, and Him you shall fear; and his commandments ye shall keep, and to his voice ye shall hearken, and Him ye shall serve, and to Him ye shall adhere.” But we have set ourselves above our God! when He commands us to love Him, we grumble at his dispensations; we think ourselves wronged by the events which befall us, as though the Judge of all the earth ever exercised judgment without a sufficient cause!—We are told, that it is God’s pleasure that we should keep the Sabbath as a sign between Him and us for ever;

but we cannot rest, our business compels us, so we say, to regard gain of a few pieces of silver more than the pleasure of our Father! Yes, a trifling gain, a gain which is often snatched from us before it is yet hoarded, we set up as an object more desirable than the favour and grace of God, which are everlasting!—And the law itself, the whole of which is alike the emanation of the same Supreme Wisdom, we treat as though it were a human invention; we reject this as unreasonable, and that as obsolete; this could only have been intended for the wilderness of Arabia, and that suits not ourselves under this or that circumstance. This is the way many of us endeavour to lighten the law for themselves, and this is, alas, the cause of all the division which so unhappily withholds many from coming to this house to worship continually with the congregation of the faithful. And if even some men *do* put faith in the whole law, they are often withheld from associating with their brethren, through offended pride. Any one receiving an offence from one connected with the Synagogue, thinks himself entitled to wreak his vengeance upon the house of God, as though his outraged feelings (even granting that he has just cause to be offended) could authorize him to break the bonds which unite him to the holy community.—Brethren, this state of things is not good! we have become a scandal to many for the small regard we bear for the law! it is said, that infidelity is making rapid progress among us! it is asserted, that the violation of the Sabbath is regarded as but a trifling offence with us! some say, that the Jews have ceased to view forbidden food with horror; and those, who see the seats of our Synagogues so often unoccupied maintain, that we have lost all religious feelings! In truth, I cannot blame any stranger, who, viewing things from appearances only, adjudges the modern Jews to be no longer a pious people. I know full well, that it is not from unbelief, but from too great a regard for personal convenience and worldly gain, that most of us transgress; but the effects are the same, whether we sin from unbelief, or from any other cause. Let us, therefore, remove the stigma; it is very easy of attainment, if we but make a serious and united effort. They who now neglect the Sabbath, may, if they but will, yield obedience to the precept, which says; “Remember

the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.”—They who have separated themselves from the Synagogue can easily return, and pay their devotions in the house dedicated to Israel’s Preserver!—They who have defiled themselves by unlawful living, may, O how easily, purify their way (although the past cannot be undone), and do as their pious fathers have done before them!—They who have wronged their fellow-men, let them make restitution to those they have injured, and make thus their peace with God and men!—Let the hater of his species accustom his heart to find pleasure in the precept: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself,” and he will find satisfaction arising to him from yielding the unjust hatred which had rendered his former existence unhappy!—And let him, who has by indulgence of his passions offended his Maker, curb the impetuosity of his conduct, and gradually return with sure and unwavering steps to the righteous path from which he has perhaps thoughtlessly, or even wickedly, strayed.—If in this manner we all “remember the law of Moses the servant of God,” how can we fail to become again a pious nation, a holy people, and a kingdom of priests? If the next anniversary of the promulgation of the law should find many wanderers from the way of virtue again united to the communion of the adherents to our Father in Heaven; if we should then be made glad by seeing the service of our pure religion more regarded and better and more numerous attended than we have found it hitherto: how exultingly we shall point to the agreeable result, and tell to others how sweetly yet speaketh, even at this distant day, the holy law to the soul of every Israelite! To effect this pious object, rests entirely with all and each of us; let each, therefore, contribute his share towards this reformation, and let no one be deterred from beginning, because one or another has not yet set the example. If we accordingly do this to the best of our ability, we may rest assured, that upon all occasions, when assembled in this house, we shall be blessed, as we are promised in the law: “In every place, where I will permit thee to mention my name, will I come and bless thee.”

O bless us, Father of mercy, and guide our wavering steps through the dangers of life, and receive us at its close into thy

paternal bosom, there to give us rest and joy, till Thou callest again the dead to everlasting and happy life. Amen.

Sivan 5th. }  
 May 23d. } 5593.

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## DISCOURSE XXVIII.

### THE SIN OF INSINCERITY.

FATHER of mercy! open thy ears to our prayers, and be gracious to us.—Not for the sake of our goodness, not because of our own righteousness do we ask thy aid; for well we know, that we have sinned—well do we know, that our hands are soiled with deeds of iniquity, and that our hearts are impure, because of the thoughts of deceit and wickedness which we have cherished. But Thou, O gracious Sovereign of all, wilt not judge us according to the strict rules of unpardoning justice; but wilt ever temper the severity of decision with the clemency of paternal favour; and mayest Thou, thus judging, call us unto thy salvation, and receive our service in favour, although we humble mortals do but little of the good, which thy grace may have permitted us to accomplish.—May this be thy will, now and for ever! Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

We often are presumptuous enough to complain of the dispensations of Heaven; we find fault with our fate, because we imagine, that we have not received what we deem our just share of the amount of happiness, which we see distributed around us. We accuse the Deity, but O how wickedly! of injustice to our great personal merits, and often compare, fool-

ishly vaunting, our own moral goodness, mental elevation, and social importance, with the same qualities in others, and then in the bitterness of our hearts we ask : "Why are we not as bountifully dealt with as our neighbours?"—Apart now from the consideration, that it is unbecoming for the creature to rise up in judgment against its Creator, there is generally in all the like complaints, whether they are uttered or merely haunting the imagination of the discontented, a great and woful want of self-knowledge at the bottom of this discontent.—We only look to the fact, that others, whom we style happy, are bad, at least we think so ; and therefore, by contrast, we come to the conclusion that we good and virtuous ones should be more happy still.—But before we should suffer any complaint to ripen in our thoughts, we ought to inquire : "Are we what we should be ? Is our virtue of that sincere, disinterested caste, that it will withstand temptation ? Is our devotion or our piety the effect of habit and imitation, or of conviction and love—pure love of God ? Has hypocrisy no part in producing outward religion in which the heart has no share ?"—And if we often, I may add daily, institute this investigation, it is to be feared, that but little unmixed virtue would be found seated in our souls. We would often find, that charity is exercised for the sake of ostentation ; benevolence to one accompanied by violence, fraud and oppression towards another ; continence exhibited before the public gaze, the better to lull the vigilance of men to secret debauchery ; and outward religion, frequent attendance at the house of God, the visiting of the sick, and even risking of life to save that of others, frequently not unaccompanied by overreaching the defenceless and practising wickedness upon the unwary.—Do I overdraw scenes of iniquity ? Or rather is this not a true exposition of feelings, which lay, alas ! but too frequently at the bottom of human goodness ? And if this is the case, and daily experience confirms it, we may no longer wonder, why the Almighty in his mercy so often lets chastisement fall upon those who practise righteousness, that they may be often recalled to investigate where the evil is for which they suffer. Already at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham asked of God : "Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?" But, O how

true is it, that nothing but justice springs from the Source of wisdom and righteousness; it is sinful man alone, who draws upon himself the consequence of sin—the punishment indissolubly connected with transgression. Aye, the righteous sins often, oftener indeed, than human pride may flatter itself; often even, as said, whilst seemingly engaged in pious deeds; and it is, therefore, that the punishment, be it light or heavy, be it mental or bodily, follows the transgression as sure as the flash precedes the sound of the awful discharge of Heaven's thunder. Now we blame our heavenly Father for punishment meted out to us; but it is we who have applied the poisoned chalice to our own lips, we quaff the fatal draught, and when we writhe under the distressing agony of a terrible dissolution we pronounce malediction upon the vender of the drug, when we alone are to blame, for having mixed the cup, and wilfully and knowingly exhausted its contents.—To follow up the simile, the righteous may say: "I will enter into the abodes of vice, will partially partake of its practice, that thereby I may restore the blunted delight my soul now takes in the exercise of unmixed good!" Let him be warned; the deadly poison of vice is like the destructive acid, the inward contact with which destroys animal life instantaneously.—And let no one trifle with sinful practices, although they be but trifling; they will overwhelm the finer feelings of his nature, as it were with the suddenness of a volcanic shower, and turn him, whither he will, its terrific flight will overtake him, till he sinks exhausted and despairing into the gaping jaws of death! Let no man then think, that since to err is human, he may safely render himself a compound of vice and virtue, of folly and wisdom! woful error! unmixed exaltation above all earthly passions should be the aim, the constant study of life, and not until this eminence is attained, can we cease to be vigilant over ourselves! And when is this point gained? never, in our existence; and it is well that it is so; we must ever toil upwards, undismayed by intervening obstacles, undisturbed by the howling of the storm, which the world, the passions, the cares of life may stir up within us! But he who vainly endeavours to hold the balance between goodness and sin will fail, and become the ungodly

wanderer, which he so sedulously avoided to be, by bestowing, what he imagined, an equal share upon both ways of life.

These considerations will be better understood, when we refer to the portion of the prophet Isaiah which has been read to-day.—After speaking of the ingratitude and thoughtlessness of the Israelites in neglecting to serve God with truth and sincerity : he compares himself and Israelites to Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of the great destruction which he foresaw ; and then continues :

שמעו דבר ה' קציני סדם האזינו תורת אלהינו עם  
עמרה : למה לי רב זבחיכם יאמר ה' שבעתי עלות אילים  
וחלב מריאים ודם פרים וכבשים ועתודים לא חפצתי : כי  
תבאו לראות פני מי בקש זאת מידכם רמס חצרי : לא  
תוסיפו הביא מנחת שוא קטרת תועבה היא לי חרש  
ושבת קרא מקרא לא אוכל און ועצרה : ישע' א' י'-ג' :

“Hear then the word of the Lord, chiefs of Sodom! listen to the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah! To what serves me the multitude of your sacrifices, speaks the Lord, I am sated with the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fatted cattle, and the blood of steers, and sheep and rams, I desire not. When you come to be seen before me—who asks this of your hands, to tread my courts?—Bring no longer the offering of deceit, it is incense of abomination to me—not new-moon-days and Sabbaths, assemblies at festivals—I like not festive rest with wickedness.” Isaiah i. 10-13.

“I like not festive rest with wickedness,” says our God, and let it be our endeavour to have this solemn lesson constantly before us, and derive the benefit from it, which we should ever derive from wisdom emanating from the Creator’s own words.—Isaiah had been sent to denounce to the Israelites their sinful practices, to tell them that the proud citadel of Zion should be left as desolate as the neglected hut in a vineyard, and that, but for the grace of God, the destruction should be as total as the subversion of the cities of the plain. Perhaps they may have pointed to the long row of oxen, of rams, and sheep led to the altar to be sacrificed, as an agreeable savour to the Lord, to the pomp with which the new-moon-days, the



Sabbaths, and festivals, were celebrated, to the sweet incense which daily was burnt upon the golden altar before the holy of holies.—And to this remonstrance, why punishment ought not to come down upon the sinning people, the prophet replies: “Hear then the word of the Lord, chiefs of Sodom, listen to the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah!” We read in the book of Genesis of the evil deeds, the unblushing licentiousness exhibited in these towns, and candour must compel us to add, that depravity but little inferior, and brought about by an attachment to idolatry and mixture with heathen nations, had taken deep root in the times of the prophets, as we must gather from their touching admonitions to an unwillingly listening people. “Chiefs of Sodom, people of Gomorrah,” says the prophet, you, who practise, both high and low, deeds discountenanced by the law of our God, and follow institutions forbidden by the word of the Lord, you will speak of sacrifices, of incense, of burning fat, of smoking altars? You point to the crowded courts of the holy temple, to the number of pilgrims that grace Jerusalem at festive seasons, and then imagine, that evil cannot come?—But you are mistaken, God no longer desires you to tread his courts; the presence of sinners, when coming unreformed, for the sake of being seen of men, is not pleasant, and He abhors festive celebration, if wickedness and sin accompany it.”—And he continues: “Your new-moon-days, and your festivals, my soul does hate, they have become a burden upon me, I am tired of bearing them. And when you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; and if even you pray ever so much, I hear not, your hands are full of blood.”—The consequences of sinning are here strongly exemplified. We are commanded to observe Sabbaths, the festivals, to assemble on those days in the city chosen as the peculiar seat of God’s majesty; He had promised, that He would come and bless us, whenever we obeyed his will in this respect, so far even as to preserve our land from the inroads of enemies, when all should have gone on their periodical pilgrimages; but when our ancestors had sinned, their very outward acts of piety were considered, not as a mitigation, but as an aggravation of their offence; the celebrations of the festivals had become, as it were, a burden

too heavy to be borne by the Sustainer of all—and even the prayers of the congregation He would no more hear, if prayers were ever so much multiplied, if all were to appear with hands outstretched to heaven, because their hands were filled with blood.—Now, if we look at what Moses said in the fourth chapter, seventh verse of Deuteronomy: “For where is there a nation, ever so great, to whom the gods are as nigh as our God, whenever we call upon Him;” we shall at one view have before us the difference between serving God in sincerity, and assuming piety as a cloak for wickedness. In the one place, we need but wish and our wish is fulfilled, as the prophet tells us in another passage; and when we transgress, no multiplicity of prostrations, no accumulation of words, no show of outspread hands will avail, for the eyes of God, as it were, are turned with horror from the sight of so much hypocrisy, and his ears are closed against the discordant sound of apparent devotion, mixed up with the contamination of vice.

After having in this manner pourtrayed the abhorrence felt for wickedness and deceit, the prophet announces what would be pleasing to God, and says: “Wash you, cleanse yourselves, remove the evil of your deeds, cease to do bad.—Learn to do good, seek justice, restore the robbed property, see justice done to the orphan, attend to the suit of the widow!”—The first step in the reformation, must be the purification of the heart, that is to say, we must endeavour to find out the sources of our hypocrisy and correct our thoughts so as not to produce again actions of the kind which our Lord abominates.—This first step taken, active purification should follow: First, to learn what is right; so that if a man has acted wrongly from ignorance, he may not be misled again by the like cause.—Then he should endeavour to dispense justice, restore what has been unlawfully obtained, and prevent oppression from descending through the practices of others upon the heads of the helpless ones. For it is unfortunately but too true, that whenever any one becomes reduced, people are very apt to begin to think ill of him, and for fear that his downward course should not be rapid enough, his former friends perhaps even assist in lending their aid to break from under his feet the little resting place he may have found, to precipitate him the faster

into the gulf of ruin; and, strange as it may seem, the lone widow and the fatherless wanderer, as also the friendless stranger, are almost daily the victims of the rapacious and designing. The prophet, therefore, designates the orphan and widow as the chief objects of the care of the sinner, who wishes to obtain the favour of God; he should, namely, having hitherto practised outward piety for the sake of appearance only, now oppose the wrong intended towards the defenceless, though in this pursuit he should expose himself to the ridicule and even obloquy of a thoughtless world.—Conduct so contrary to hypocrisy and time-serving persevered in, will next tend to obtain the forgiveness of sins; as the Lord says: “If your sins be like scarlet they shall be white as the snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” This is the image the messenger of Heaven used to express the change which repentance, inward and outward, will invariably produce in man; the glare of the scarlet is to vanish, and the pure whiteness of snow shall take its place; and truly when the heart has undergone a change from badness and corruption to virtue and entire recovery, it is not what it was, nay, it bears not even the least resemblance to its former self, but is, as though a heart of stone had been removed, and one of flesh substituted in its place;—the want of hope is supplied by hope in the Lord, and the absence of peace is superseded by the all-healing grace of God.

Thus were the effects of sin and the results of piety laid by Isaiah before Israel. He told them further, that doing good would certainly bring the blessing promised, but that the sword should destroy them, if they refused obedience.—Alas! however, their ears were closed against hearing, and their hearts against understanding, and they continued their course of iniquity, undismayed by the reproof and instructions of those sent to admonish them. And the sword was drawn, and the fire was kindled; and our virgins, our sages, our tender children, and our strong men were slaughtered, and our palaces were burnt, and our temple devoured *twice* by the consuming flame. And those, whom the sword had spared, were led into captivity, and here we linger distant from all the scenes of our early institutions, scattered and dispersed over all the earth! And

those few, who have returned to the land of Palestine, to lay their bones near the graves of the fathers of our people, live degraded, in fear of enemies and in poverty, in the home of the former free and brave Hebrew nation! Aye, so miserable is their state, that to this distant land even, they send their accredited men to ask for aid, to buy bread for their helpless children, and to rescue from the grasp of the cruel creditor the bodies of the ancients and sages among them!

All this has come over us, because we refused to mould our actions by the ordinances of the law, because we preferred worldly pleasures to the favour of the Everlasting One.—We, therefore, have yet to mourn every year, at this time, the destruction of all that was sacred in Jerusalem, the slaughter of the priests and the burning of the temple.—And yet, the mournful ninth of Ab, the day on which all these evils occurred, scarcely calls up in the bosoms of many of us, any emotion of national grief—since many think it not necessary to mourn for all that has been lost, and for the change which has so awfully visited our people! Nay more, the law of God, the infraction of which was so terribly visited, the truth of which has been so awfully proven, is not even now responded to by our hearts; we add to this day, yea, more than formerly, wickedness to transgression, and brave the thunders of God, as though they would not be sent, and smite at length our guilty heads into the dust! And truly said Isaiah: “Wo! sinning people, nation loaded with wickedness, seed of evil-doers, destroying children!—they have forsaken the Lord, incensed the Holy One of Israel, and departed back from the righteous path!”—Indeed, it is useless to hide the truth from ourselves, that much private and public sin exists among us, and that the denunciations of the ancient prophet are as yet applicable to our own days.—But this state of things must alter, this unrighteousness must cease; for the day will come, when God will revenge himself of his opponents, and take vengeance of his enemies, at the time when He consigneth to condign punishment those who have transgressed his law.—Then also, will the Lord let his hand pass over us, and like the crucible smelt out our dross and remove all our alloy; and, adds the prophet: “And I will reappoint thy judges as formerly, and thy councillors as

in old times, and after this thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the trusty town. Zion shall be redeemed through justice, and those who return unto her through righteousness.

O may it be thy will, Father of mercy, to fulfil speedily the promises Thou didst make through thy prophets, and raise up again thy altars, where offerings of righteousness, and incense of purity shall be offered to Thee for everlasting. Amen.

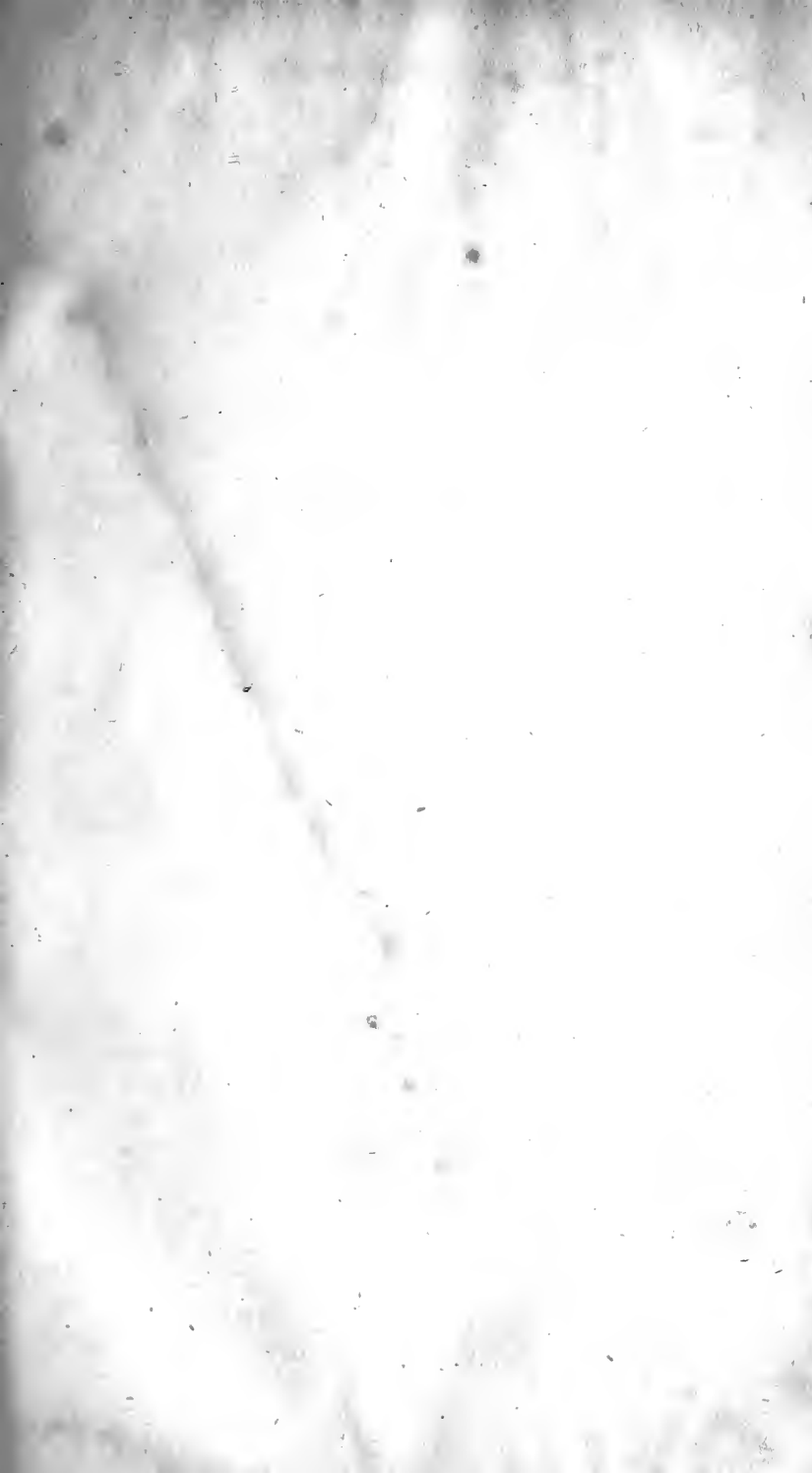
Ab 3d. }  
July 19th. } 5593.

NOTE.—During the summer of '93 (1833) arrived here an accredited messenger from Jerusalem, by name Rabbi Enoch Zundell. His presence gave rise to the allusion to the state of suffering Israelites in Palestine, in whose behalf he had been sent.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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DISCOURSES,  
ARGUMENTATIVE AND DEVOTIONAL,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF  
THE JEWISH RELIGION.

DELIVERED

AT THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVEH ISRAEL, IN PHILADELPHIA,  
IN THE YEARS 5590—5597,

BY

ISAAC LEESER,  
MINISTER OF THE ABOVE CONGREGATION.

---

הלאו כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע :  
ירמ' כג' כט' :

“Behold! thus is my word, says the Lord, like the fire, and like the hammer that shivers the rock.”  
JEREMIAH xxiii. 29.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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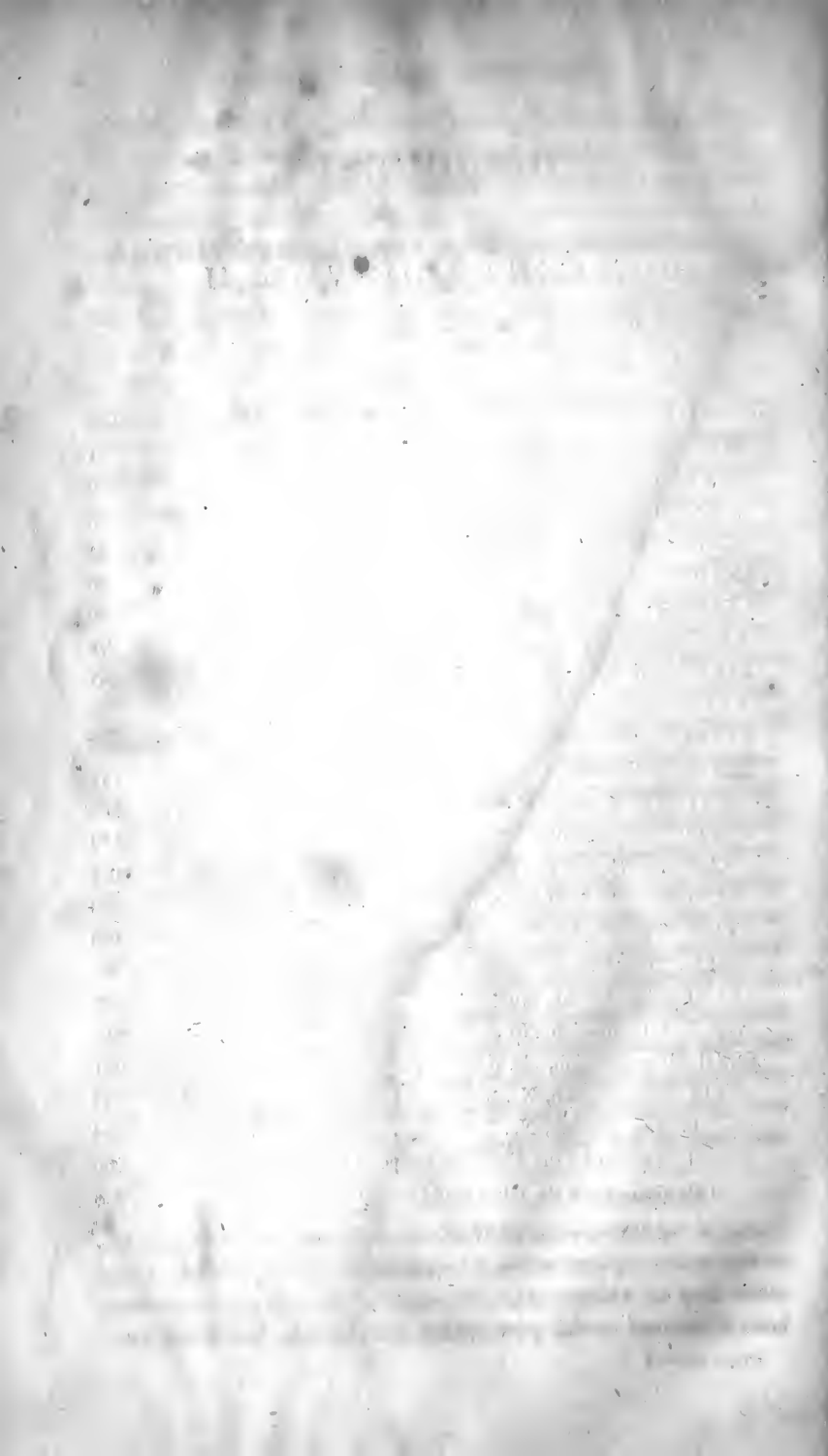
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DISCOURSES,  
ARGUMENTATIVE AND DEVOTIONAL,  
ON THE  
JEWISH RELIGION.

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DISCOURSE XXIX.

THE DUTY OF INSTRUCTION.

O THOU, who appointest to each man a destiny of good or evil as his ways may deserve, and who art ever ready to annul the evil decree, when the sinner returneth unto Thee with prayer and sincerity: receive now, at this season of forgiveness of sin, the supplications which we, thy people Israel, address to Thee in the countries of our captivity; and may our prayer be as acceptable before Thee, as was the sacrifice without blemish which was formerly brought to thy temple as an atonement for the transgressions of thy congregation. O save us from evil! O protect us from the contumely of the ungodly and the persecutions of the strangers to thy holy creed; and let thy grace be displayed over us, so that all inhabitants of the earth may see, that in truth we are called by thy name. May this be thy will. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Again by the favour of God, we are permitted to assemble in this house of prayer, and to anticipate the approach of another Day of Atonement. To many of us new joys may have been dispensed in the year which has elapsed; but many have

had to drink the cup of sorrow. Weal and wo have, as usual, chased each other in their circuit round our globe; and, perhaps, the distressed one has been gladdened by an unexpected enlargement, and the proud and he who conceived himself secure and firmly seated have been moved, and their grandeur rendered as naught, and their security been turned into tribulation. The picture here presented is an occurrence of every day of our life; but its instructiveness is not in the least diminished by its frequency. To him, who does not take heed of what passes, the subversion of a world would hardly be more than a natural phenomenon; but to the mind alive to religious impression, every event speaks of the unerring wisdom of God, which orders every thing for the wisest of purposes. To a mind so constituted nothing should pass unheeded; and from the evil no less than the good instruction and improvement will flow unto him, since he always considers, that the hand of the Lord has done it. Even should he himself be the object, against whom the divine judgment is directed, it will cause him to reflect and ponder, and consequently to correct the defectiveness of his course, and thus it may truly be said: that to the wise and righteous light will beam out of darkness! But the heedless one will receive the greatest blessings as a matter of course, and whatever of punishment he may meet with, he will either think a personal injury done to his righteousness, or will pass it by without bestowing a thought upon it.—And behold the difference! The righteous one is meek in prosperity and, however exalted, he sees a brother in the humblest of beings; and in adversity he humbly bends to the rod which is sent to chastise him; but the thoughtless transgressor is insolent in prosperity, and when he suffers he vents his wrath in imprecations and ill-humour, as though the Judge of all flesh could be driven to remove merited punishment by the waywardness of the obdurate child.—It requires but little penetration to distinguish between the better and the worse of these two principles of action, since our life is so constantly diversified by good and evil, by reward and punishment. But, alas, the thinking ones are the smaller portion of mankind, heedlessness and obstinacy are too often characterised as cheerfulness and firmness, and hence we see so little reformation pro-

duced by causes, which any disinterested witness would consider sufficiently powerful to call forth serious reflection. Thus it happens, that the chastisements which God sends, as our holy writings teach us, to warn us of our errors, but too often fail to have the good effect for which they are intended.—The Almighty, therefore, knowing the weakness of human nature, and also knowing how much one man is apt to be influenced by the words and deeds of the other, and how much the cares of life tend to claim almost the whole attention, to the exclusion of every thing else, of each mortal, has set apart a portion of every year as a peculiar time for reflection and repentance, to fix, as it were, more emphatically the wavering fancy; to assemble all believers to unite by words and acts in devotion and repentance, and to make this short period dedicated to the pursuit of penitence and of righteousness as our chief occupation. And well is this time chosen. For when we were the Israelites of Palestine, not given as now to trading and money-hunting as our chief pursuit, but to manual labour and agriculture, the beginning of the civil year was just the period of all the most congenial to piety. Behold! every man had finished his work in the field, his crop of grain and fruit had been housed, and his efforts blessed by the bounteous hand of God. If ever man can feel grateful, it is surely the time, when he has ample cause to be so; and if ever he should feel repentance, it is when he has felt the evil effects of transgression. And as our land was always fruitful when we were righteous, and as punishment universally followed transgression: every one could easily feel, often even by the result of his harvest, if his and his neighbours' conduct had been in the spirit of godliness or not.—Then again, it is the beginning of our year; and, therefore, it was proper then, and is no less so now, to begin a new period with extraordinary acts of devotion, and to repent, even if we should not be conscious of any aggravated sin in ourselves, of wrongs committed unwittingly, and of faults into which we may have misled others by unkindness of manner, or by indiscreet advice. It is, therefore, incumbent on us, so our wise and blessed teachers tell us, to pacify our offended neighbour before the Day of Atonement comes, so that he may not stand with aggrieved feelings of

bitterness towards us, when he comes to ask forgiveness for his own sins; and to those who have the capacity, it is commanded to exhort the brethren on this Sabbath of Repentance to a contrition of hearts, and a firm purpose to amend whatever of fault, stubbornness, and waywardness they may discover in themselves. And on this subject, we read the following in the book of Ezekiel (chap. xxxiii.): “And the word of the Lord came unto me as follows: Son of man say unto the children of thy people and speak unto them: A land, when I bring over it the sword; and the people of the land take one man from amongst them, and appoint him as their sentinel; and when he sees the sword coming over the land, and he blows the cornet, and warns the people: and if the hearer hears the voice of the cornet, and is not warned, and the sword comes and takes him off; his blood shall be on his own head—the voice of the cornet he has heard and he has not taken warning; his blood shall be upon himself; for he was warned and could have saved his life. But if the sentinel see the sword coming, and he blow not the cornet, and the people be not warned, and the sword come and take one of them: he has been taken away for his sin, and his blood I will require of the sentinel.”—And thus continues the prophecy:

ואתה בן אדם צפה נתתיך לבית ישראל ושמעת מפי  
 דבר והזהרת אתם ממני: באמרי לרשע רשע מות תמות  
 ולא דברת להזהיר רשע מדרכו הוא רשע בעונו ימות  
 ודמו מידך אבקש: ואתה כי הזהרתו רשע מדרכו לשוב  
 ממנה ולא שב מדרכו הוא בעונו ימות ואתה נפשך  
 הצלת: יח' לג' ז'-ט' :

“And thou son of man! I have appointed thee a sentinel for the house of Israel, and when thou hearest a word out of my mouth, thou shalt warn them from me. When I say of the wicked: Wicked one thou shalt die; and thou speakest not to warn the wicked from his way, this wicked one shall die for his sin, and his blood from thy hand I will require. But thou, when thou hast forewarned the wicked from his way, to return therefrom, and he do not return from his way: he for his sins shall die, but thou hast saved thy soul.” xxxiii. 7-9.



In the extract here presented to your consideration, brethren! you will see, that the duty to admonish others is one solemnly enjoined by God in his commands to his prophet. It is true, that the holy spirit is no longer displayed over the messengers of the Almighty, as palpably as it was in olden times; but the effects of the spirit, which was formerly poured out, are yet in existence, for the promulgated word is yet in our hands, in our mouths, and in our hearts; and thus the command issued to Ezekiel to forewarn the sinner is yet operative even at this very day. In pursuance of this duty, I address you now, since unworthy as I am, I occupy for the moment the place of teacher in the community. No one is more conscious than myself, that my own course is not faultless; no one need tell me to take the beam from between my eyes, since I never would arrogate to myself the idea of perfection; but only as one brother exhorts the other to reflection do I wish to be viewed, as one of the people, guilty of the same derelictions, and actuated by the same sinful propensities, who himself derives instruction and correction through those labours by which he endeavours to benefit others. To adopt the simile of the prophet: the sentinel is not the less threatened by the sword, nor the less menaced by dangers, because he stands upon a tower to discover the danger at a distance, and because he has the cornet by his side to forewarn the townsmen of the approaching destruction.—Brethren! we all have sinned; and but rarely are we able to say with truth, that one entire day has passed over our heads, that we have employed in doing all the good we could, and avoiding all the evil which was avoidable. We have, perhaps, neglected to make ourselves acquainted with our duties; and our ignorance, through which we sin, has been a voluntary one; and we cannot claim an exemption from punishment by the plea of good intentions, and the not knowing of the hurtfulness of our doings.—Or perhaps we have haply discovered our faults, and have resolved to amend; but this determination has been deferred from day to day, and we are as bad as we were last year and the year before the last.—Seeing our misconduct, we may have thrown the cloak of hypocrisy, or the veil of extenuation over it; we may have considered our aberrations as unimportant, and which the Almighty would

not notice ; in short, we may have done every thing in our power to fancy ourselves good and virtuous without our being so, and consequently have persevered in a course which ought to have been abandoned ; and have even wondered, to use the language of Isaiah : “ Why have we fasted and God has not seen, why have we afflicted our souls and He knows it not ? ” But it is entire blindness which causes us to argue in this manner, aye, a voluntary one even, for we might have reasoned better if we had taken proper means to form a better judgment. We speak of our righteousness—of our resignation—of our humility—of our charities ; but we imagine vainly, that by practising a few virtues, we have exhausted the whole series of good deeds ! Fatal self-delusion ! even granted that we have ourselves done every thing relating to our persons ; have we, I ask, done all in relation to others ? Have we made virtue estimable ? have we espoused the cause of righteousness when we heard it assailed ? have we placed ourselves forward to check corruption ? have we listened with becoming humility to the advice and remonstrance of others ? have not our slothfulness and our timidity prevented us from resisting the wrong ? And even if we can answer all these queries in a manner to satisfy our consciences, we have yet the startling question to meet : “ How have we educated our children ? ” We boast about the beauty of our religion ; we deplore its downfall in the misconduct of many around us ; we withdraw even from popular meetings, because we cannot stem the tide of wrong measures enforced against the precepts of the law : but our children we neglect, they are to obtain a knowledge of religion by intuition or inspiration ; we do not trouble ourselves to teach them the way they should walk in, we do not show them the path of righteousness ; all we do is to tell them that they are born of Jewish parentage, and leave them then to find their way to the knowledge and practice of the precepts revealed to Moses, as well as they can ; we have discharged our duty by being their corporeal parents, and we either have not the abilities or the inclination to become their spiritual ones also. And even if we tell them a few of the commandments, we are too enlightened forsooth to enforce them ; we allege to live in a free country, and say, every one has a right to do what he pleases.

Abstractedly speaking, we have a power of doing whatever we will, even the most unnatural crimes; but the right to do wrong is an absurdity, which none but weak minds can ever entertain. This being the case, it is evidently absurd to let our children go unpunished, or at all events unproved, if they fail to attend to the religious duties which we ourselves teach them, or which an instructor has imparted, to whose care we have entrusted their education. But this, alas! is not our mode of proceeding, for no matter how little regardful the child is of religious observance, we close our eyes against it, and foolishly imagine, that riper years will teach him more correctly, than our persuasion can do in childhood. But we deceive ourselves; for religion is a check upon the inclinations and passions, as has been said already very often; if, therefore, the curbing of these passions and these inclinations has not been strictly enforced at an age when the physical organization of the body is not sufficiently developed to permit the child to act as his sensual feelings demand: how can it be expected that he will be moderate in the enjoyment of unhallowed pleasures, when he feels himself drawn towards them by the example of others and his inward impulse, when he at the same time imagines, that his powers of mind and body are now fully equal to their being taken in large and immoderate quantities?—Or we attend carefully to the education of our children in childhood; we early teach them to repeat, when they first begin to lisp with their infant stammer, the unity of our God; yes, they are taught to say: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Eternal Being.” As they advance farther in years, we instil in them a part of the duties they owe to this only God, aye, make them acquainted by degrees with the whole duties of man. But no sooner have they reached the age of boyhood, than all restraint is at once withdrawn, and they are taught to unlearn all the lessons of their childhood; for it is not to be supposed that the young gentleman need be an attendant at the place of worship; it can hardly be expected of him, that he should abstain from forbidden food; and as for Sabbaths and the festivals—he is placed in a situation, where their observance is next to impossible; he is told, that it is the chief business of his life to amass money, either as a merchant, a mechanic, a physician, or a law-

yer, and that he will have done enough to satisfy his parents' scruples, if he comes once a year or once in two years, on a Kippur or Rosh-Hashanah-Day, to appear before the altar of God, provided he does all in his power during the rest of the time to advance the interest of his parents or his own, and their mutual high-standing in society. And even if we teach our children actually and truly how to fear God, we very often destroy all good effects by our own irreligious conduct. We teach them: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy," and we follow our pursuits on this day; what then can they learn? is not our good instruction more than counterbalanced by our own transgression? Again we complain, that our children will not attend at the Synagogue, despite of our commands to that effect; but we teach them the example, by staying at home for every trifling excuse we can make to lull our inward accuser.—We tell them to abstain from forbidden food; whilst we ourselves cease to be strict Jews, as soon as we leave a congregation.—We tell our children not to tell lies, and not to calumniate or speak evil of others; but they see daily, how we prevaricate, slander the innocent, and misconstrue the words and deeds of others.—We tell our children to believe in the word of God, to adhere to the faith of their ancestors; and they nevertheless hear every now and then how we dispute in their presence about the fundamental parts of the law even, not to mention the minor observances.—We tell our children, how glorious a boon the Almighty has given us in bestowing his holy Torah on our ancestors; but it is useless to hide from them, that we are ashamed of being at times known as Jews, as though it were a disgrace to be descended from that glorious people, who were enlightened in a pure knowledge of the Creator, and in possession of his wise and saving laws, whilst the Egyptians worshipped beasts, the Chaldeans the host of heaven, the Phœnicians the Moloch, and the Persians the fire; whilst the Grecians were roving sea-robbers; the Romans not in existence; the Gauls and Germans savages roaming through their trackless, swampy forests; and whilst the Britons, the predecessors of the proud English nation, stalked about naked with their bodies painted blue, like modern savages of some southern isle. And our children, I assert, must discover constantly by our manner,

that we are well nigh ashamed of being known as the posterity of the noble Israelitish people, who were enlightened and religious, whilst the rest of the world was either sunk in barbarism or gross idolatry. And how again can our younger ones attain sufficient self-respect to avow their adherence to the Mosaic creed publicly, when their guardians and parents are at so much pains constantly to surround themselves with those not belonging to the covenant, whilst the Jew is excluded, even from the Jew's house, as though he were not fit to associate with the distinguished men and women of other sects? Is it now to be wondered at, that our children are daily growing more indifferent to our holy religion? that they ultimately throw off its yoke altogether? and that we are compelled to call the Romanist, the Protestant, and the infidel, by the endearing names of uncle, aunt, brother, sister, and cousin? How can we be astonished, that the followers of our faith are daily becoming fewer amongst our younger members, when their education is so wretchedly defective, as has been just exhibited to you? And truly, brethren, if our religion were any thing but divine, it must long since have died out in many countries, and in this country in particular. But there is a germ of life in the institutions handed down from Sinai, which no misconduct of men can extinguish; aye, let every roll of the law (but which God forbid) be ordered to the flames by some new persecutor yet unborn, and let the teachers of our religion be all led out to execution: there would still arise teachers and books of the law from amid the slain adherents, and from amid the ashes of the rolls, and anew would the word be dispensed to the thirsting world; for it is written, that the law shall never depart from our mouth, nor from the mouth of our remotest descendants.—But I digress; the contemplation of the glorious permanence of the treasure preserved in yonder ark before us would lead me from my subject, should I suffer my feelings to lead me on. To revert to our subject; if we wish to do any thing to advance the cause of our religion, we must begin to attend more carefully, than we have been in the habit of doing, to the education of our children, so that each parent may have well founded hopes, to see arising in his offspring a new generation of adherents to the law of God, and have the satisfaction to

know, that, when he is departing to a better world, his descendants have been so educated, that he may look forward to meeting with them again before the throne of God in bliss and happiness.—Indeed, no other repentance can be of any real good; for whilst each man reforms only himself, he has done but very little of what his God can with justice demand of him. Suppose a spirit should appear before the judgment of the Most High, and be questioned what he had done with the charges entrusted to his care, and be compelled to answer, that one had forsaken the Synagogue for the church of Rome; another had joined the Moslem, and a third had become an atheist, because he the father had neglected to teach them carefully the way they should go; can it be supposed that happiness would be awarded to him? No, the voice of thunder would reverberate in his ears with the dreadful doom: “Be thou consigned to punishment, till thy children have expiated their guilt, for thou, their parent, and their sentinel, hast neglected to obey the precept which sayeth: And thou shalt teach them carefully unto thy children, and thou shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and because being by God appointed their sentinel and guardian thou hast neglected thy trust, and been careless about warning them of the danger they were running by entering the way of sin.”—Would this not be a doom deserved by a parent so acting? and how many expose themselves daily to it by their entire or partial forgetfulness of the sacred trust reposed in them; for, brethren, you must know, that the children with which we may be blest are not to be looked upon as our sole property, and whose religious education we are permitted to neglect or promote as may suit our fancy; on the contrary, they are like something left by one person in the safe-keeping of another, who receives pay for the trouble he may be at for watching the property entrusted to him, but which may be demanded back at any moment, unhurt and entire. The parents must, therefore, take all the pains they are capable of, to instruct their children in infancy in their duties, and to show them such an example of righteousness in their own persons, that they may never be induced either to despise their parents for

their impiety, or to neglect the instruction they receive; and when the age of infancy is passed, care should be taken that the lessons of childhood be not effaced by the license or temptation held out, or by downright compulsion to forsake the path of religion. If, after all, our offspring should not be according to our expectations, we have done our duty, we have warned them, and their blood will be on their own heads.

Brethren, long since have I wished to address you upon this very important subject; and I must ask your indulgence for having detained you so much longer than it is my custom to do. But I need not tell you, that what has been said this day, is not half sufficient to discuss the subject in any way commensurate with its importance; my object was merely to draw your attention seriously to this matter, little doubting, but that your own reflections will fill up whatever is defective in this slight sketch.—To you, therefore, fathers in Israel, do I address myself; devote some more time to the personal superintendence over the education of your children, and do not leave their future happiness entirely to pensioned strangers, who but too often think themselves absolved from all responsibility, when their scholars are perfect in their lessons; as they say, and perhaps with justice, that they are not chosen to teach religion and morality, but only the usual routine of sciences and accomplishments, some of which are, at best, of doubtful usefulness!—And you, who are mothers in the house of Jacob, listen I pray you, to the advice of a brother, though he be young and not as experienced or as virtuous as many of you. In your power it is to produce a great reformation in the state of our youths. It is said by our wise men: “That for the merit of pious women our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt;” and I am confident, that even to this day true devotion and true piety dwell in many a bosom of the virgins and matrons of our people. Try, then, your gentle power of persuasion, which you can so powerfully exert; lead your children and your wards in the way they should go; point out to them the deceits of transgression; tell them how many a noble mind has been wrecked upon the devious way of sin, and how many an humble orphan has been raised to eminence, solely by the pursuit of virtue, based upon the revelation from Sinai.—If even some

hours usually devoted to pleasure and recreation should have to be abstracted for this arduous undertaking, you will be sufficiently rewarded, when you see your sons grow up round your table like the sprouts of the olive in the fertile field, with vigorous minds dwelling in uncorrupted bodies.—If thus we are all united, if the teacher, the father, and the mother all co-operate, we may ultimately hope to see a race of firm believers spring up in this country, nay, in this very town; and the Synagogue which is now so often nearly empty, will then be filled by adorers anxious to hasten to the house of God; we shall then not be ashamed of being told, that professing Jews partook of the flesh of the prohibited swine in public; we shall then not be mortified by finding one Jew despising the other, and joining himself in wedlock to the stranger; we shall then not be shocked by the public profanation of the Sabbath and festivals, whereas we now witness, perhaps this very day, people attending to their usual occupations in open violation of our law.

As I said, in the beginning of this discourse, this is the season of repentance, and the beginning of a new year after the creation. Shall we not resolve to begin this new period in a new and better manner? shall it be said, that year after year none of us has amended a faulty life? No, let it be our endeavour to prove that we have removed the obduracy of our hearts, that the heavenly legacy is still dear to our souls, and that having been warned, we have been roused to reflection, to adoration, and repentance.—We have heard the voice of the cornet, the call of the Lord has been sounded in our dwellings; let it animate us to reconsider our doings and to reform the evil of our ways; and may we thus deserve to have the decree recorded for our benefit and happiness in the book of remembrance before our everlasting Judge, when the Day of Atonement closes: “My children, your sins are forgiven!”

O adorable and unending One! shower over us thy grace and protection; let thy wisdom fill our souls; so that, taught of Thee, we may be led to a perfect understanding of our duties, and know fully the end of our appointment on earth. Lead us far from the way of temptation and of contempt, and preserve us entire in our dispersion; and let thy mercy prevail, when Thou sealest on the approaching Day of Forgiveness of sin



the fate of the children of men; and say in mercy to the recording angel: "I have found atonement!" May this be thy will, now, and for ever! Amen.

Tishry 5th. }  
 Sept. 18th. } 5594.

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### DISCOURSE XXX.

#### THE SELECTION OF ISRAEL.

FATHER OF MERCY! who art so highly elevated above every thing existing, that even the utmost extent of the universe cannot contain Thee: deign to display thy glory over us, and to dwell in the hearts of those of thy children as are of devout heart and contrite spirit. So that all mankind may be convinced, that to Thee alone, everlasting One, appertain the glory, the majesty, and the dominion over all, and be led to worship Thee only, in truth and sincerity. Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

Many of you may have heard ridicule cast upon what some term the arrogance of the Hebrews in styling themselves the chosen people. For our opponents say, that all earth belongs to God, and it is unworthy of his greatness to select the fewest of people as his peculiar treasure. Besides they aver, that we do not show such a superiority above other classes of men as would justly entitle us to a distinction so proud, even granting that God had chosen us.—Others again say, that in truth we have once been actually the chosen people, but that now we are rejected for our rebellious conduct.—We will briefly examine all these objections, and see whether it is beneath the dignity of God to have *one* people to whom He, the All-wise,

attaches more importance than to any other ; whether we possess any superiority ; and, lastly, if it be consonant with Revelation, that we should have been rejected after having been once chosen.

We know from the whole tenor of the history of mankind, that the children of man in the early ages, as well as in later times, did transgress those bounds of righteousness which the Almighty had marked out for their guidance. Misled by pride, blinded by passion, and heedless of consequences, they followed the counsels of their wicked hearts, and said to God : “ Go away from us.” Till their crimes had reached a height no longer tolerable to the just and wise Creator ; when He opened the windows of heaven, split the fountains of the mighty deep, and the rushing, surging waters of the flood swept off the sinful race from the face of the earth. But in punishing the sinners, the Merciful was not unconscious of the work of his hands, and He saved from amidst the destruction the man who had been righteous and upright in his generation ; and Noah was thus saved to repeople the earth, and he became in this manner the second father to the intelligent inhabitants of the globe.

To him also were given statutes and commandments, by which a man might walk in the way of righteousness ; but his descendants also forgot very soon, like the nations before the flood had done, their duties towards God, and they instituted worships which they had invented through their fancy, and they obeyed laws which were counter to the revelation given to Noah.—You will thus see, that twice the world had an example of a universal and uniform revelation, and twice also an example of the forgetfulness by the world of a revelation given to all. The parallel holds good even farther. For, as before the flood there was one man righteous more than his generation : there also was found in the second general corruption of manners *one* pre-eminent for his signal piety ; this man, as you all know, and as we have noticed on prior occasions, was Abraham. We need not recapitulate his history, any farther than to mention that God made with him a covenant, as the Bible calls it, to make his descendants a people peculiarly chosen to the service of God, and that they should observe the precepts which the Lord had or should ordain.—You will ob-

serve, brethren, that which has just been said will answer the first objection started above. The Almighty had found, that as human nature was constituted, and observing the situation of mankind at that period, it would not answer any good purpose to give a general revelation for a third time; for we have every reason to think that a law so given would have been disregarded again and again, and every succeeding generation would have departed further from the truth, if it had been the common legacy of all, and consequently not valued because of its universality. It was therefore that God called Abraham to his service, after he had displayed his devotion amidst idolaters, that is to say, that the laws given to Noah had found in him a faithful adherent, despite the general aberration with which he was on all sides surrounded. Abraham was therefore told, that he should be blessed, and that at length all nations should be blessed through him. What now was the consequence of the promise to Abraham? what in fact could it be? It was, that to his descendants there should be given a law, a code, of universal application and of everlasting duration; this was a blessing to Abraham himself, and one which alone could bless ultimately all nations of the earth; for in the spread of the tenets of truth every human being can lay a claim to a portion of the blessing flowing from such an event; but let conquest be extended ever so far, the conquered must suffer, for there can be no conquest without sufferers; and riches distributed in unbounded plenty will not satisfy the cravings of cupidity and the discontents of envy, even if every human being were to be placed above want. But truth spread, as we have said, universally abroad, distributed to all human beings alike, is indeed that species of treasure through which none are made to suffer, and which leaves no room to excite the discontent of the envious.

But, brethren, whilst feeling within ourselves, how great the blessing is we possess in the revealed law of our God, we must not overlook the astonishing evidence of the most unsearchable wisdom which is displayed in the whole arrangement of its promulgation. Observe:—if God had descended in the utmost state of majesty, and revealed himself to Abraham, to Isaac, or to Jacob, assume the magnificence to have been even exceeding

the descent on Sinai : still it would have been a revelation to individuals, and succeeding generations would have doubted the evidence of *one* man, who, though ever so good, might have been misled, or might be presumed to relate a falsehood in order to magnify his own importance. Therefore a limited number of statutes only was given to the patriarchs, which they were ordered to observe, and to teach their descendants after them. This state of dawning light lasted for about four centuries; ray after ray of light had been gradually dispensed,—Adam—Hanoah—Noah—Abraham—Isaac—Jacob—Joseph—and perhaps others, of whom no account has come down to our days, because it has no material bearing on the subject of revealed religion, had the Word of God made known to them; thousands upon thousands of the children of the covenant had been added to the original stock of one father and one mother; labour and distress appeared to weigh down their spirits as well as bodies; all hope had well nigh been extinguished in the bosoms of Pharaoh's bondmen: when suddenly a light, not a *ray* merely, but a bright luminary, burst forth;—it was a Moses, aided by a benevolent Aaron, both true shepherds, chosen from among the million, that appeared to fulfil the aim of God's intention. And it therefore came to pass in those days, that the glory of our Father was manifestly displayed, and guided by his care Israel went out with rejoicing and gladness to meet their Supreme Ruler at the foot of the holy Sinai.—Here the consummation of the calling of Abraham was brought about by the legation of Moses, and the revelation of God was made visible and audible to all the people. And thus not to one great man, but to at least three millions of intelligent beings was confided a light, a treasure, a fruitful source of blessing, which will in the course of time enlighten, enrich, bless, and nourish all nations of the earth.—If then a caviller should ask us: “Why do you believe in the divine legation of Moses?” we may boldly answer: Because there were present the individuals of an entire people, who all were witnesses of the truth of the revelation from Horeb, since all ultimately acquiesced in the rule thus divinely made known, and because these very persons rose up in an incredible short time into a nation wiser than their former task-masters, different from them

in language, manners, and associations of ideas, and proved themselves in possession of a rule of life, and of notions concerning the Deity, far above in purity and truth to aught that had ever been attained by the Egyptians themselves, their predecessors, or their followers, nay, even to this very day.— Shall we say, that a nation of abject, timid, leprous slaves (for this is the character given of the Israelites) could rise in forty years to a height so unparalleled by the instruction of one man, who had past the age of eighty, and who must be supposed to have partaken already largely of the infirmities of age at this period? You, my brethren, would no doubt think, that the opinion I have just now stated is too ridiculous to be entertained by an intelligent mind; yet it has been entertained by the unbelievers, and forms their chief point in explaining upon merely natural grounds the rise of our people during their wanderings in the wilderness. Yet even grant the objection a thousand times more importance than it deserves, say even it is true: we then should have a miracle still greater than we claim to have been performed.—For our slavery in Egypt is undoubted and undenied even by the heathen. Secondly, our wanderings in the wilderness are also considered authentic. Thirdly, our having a *written* law different from the written law of any other nation is undeniable. Fourthly, it must be inferred, that if the Egyptian priests had had a private or secret law taught in their mysteries not hitherto promulgated to the people, they would certainly have been able, and no doubt would have attempted, to counteract Moses, by making known the same powerful instrument which he had just imparted to the Israelites. Fifthly, it does not bear contradiction that the Israelites after hovering for forty years about the confines of civilized countries, which they were not permitted to enter, conquered Palestine and drove out the inhabitants. Now the simple question is, how were the Egyptians induced to forego the labour of six hundred thousand slaves? Did their humanity prompt them to this act of benevolence?—Further;—why did those slaves enter a frightful wilderness? why did they not at once attack a fertile settlement?—Again, whence did they obtain their peculiar statutes?—And granted they were derived from Egyptian sources, what is the reason that the

worship of the Egyptians was in most respects so different? And lastly, how did so immense a number of men find subsistence in a wilderness where there is not even water to drink? If, therefore, we even grant to Moses a mind unlike that which any other man ever possessed, and a vigour of body but little less than angelic: it must still be self-evident that the workings which took place under his administration are too extraordinary to have been the result of ordinary human labour. We have therefore the strongest evidence of the concurrent testimony of our entire people and of a mass of unbroken chains of events to establish the reasonableness of a belief in the selection of Israel as a people chosen by God to hold, as a depositary, a law which was in the first instance to guide them, and at length all other families of the earth.—And in the manner of the selection of Israel, I allude to the manner of their-preparatory education by a long series of calamities, we must also discover the marks of profound wisdom. If the law had been given to an opulent people, living in a fruitful country, it might have happened, that being too much devoted to affairs of life, the study of the law would have become a secondary consideration with them, especially if they would have had to subject themselves to many inconveniences under the new law. But what did God do to implant the law in the hearts of the Israelites?—He caused Jacob to go down to Egypt, impelled through love for Joseph; there his descendants multiplied and became a numerous nation as had been predicted. And when the jealousy of the rulers of the land became excited, the All-wise One did not interfere to prevent the contemplated oppression, foreseeing that it, though protracted from age to age, would in the best manner subserve to his wise views. But when the Egyptians, emboldened by the impunity they had so long enjoyed, began to threaten the extermination of their servants, as soon as they declared their will of going counter to the permission hitherto tacitly extended: the arm of our God was interposed, and the oppressed were freed from bondage, and led, as you all know, through the desert, after having passed the Red Sea, to the foot of Sinai. Miracle after miracle, some natural, some preternatural, had been wrought, to prove to them how powerful, how kind, how wise, how infinite was the

God whom their ancestors had worshipped, and to illustrate, in the most striking manner, that the promises made to the good will always be kept, and the reward of their virtuous deeds will surely come, though delayed for a period, for reasons unknown to short-sighted man. Thus delivered and thus protected, our ancestors were notified that their Deliverer would manifest unto them his glory, and make known to them his laws. They declared their willingness, with hearts glowing with gratitude, and minds filled with adoration. The law was then given, to the people thus chosen ; and though they occasionally rebelled, yet their situation was so that the law of God constantly became renewed as often as his power was displayed ; and this state of their national infancy was consumed by wandering for forty years in the desert, where at length the heavenly code was so firmly cemented among them, that even now it is inextinguishable in the heart of every Israelite.—Understand me well, I do not wish to be understood as saying, that it would have been out of the power of God to effect an instantaneous change of heart among the Hebrews, or to communicate his will at the same moment to all men ; but merely as proving that God pursued a course, eminently calculated, more so indeed than any other our imagination can conceive, to make his law acceptable to the Israelites and permanent among their descendants, short of changing human nature ; which last procedure would evidently have been in opposition to the divine economy ; and that having once given to his code of pure laws and morality a lasting and imperishable abode on earth ; he at the same time had already provided for it a way to the hearts of all mankind, who as we have every reason to believe will all ultimately forsake each his idols of silver, and each his idols of gold, to serve Him, the Lord, in sincerity and righteousness. And says Isaiah, in the spirit of inspiration : “ And I will show a sign on them, and I will send from them refugees to the nations Tarshish, Pul and Lud, those that draw the bow, Tubal and Yavan, the far islands, that have not heard my fame, and have not seen my glory, and they shall tell of my glory among the nations ; lxvi. 19.—What then can be found derogatory to the greatness of God in his choosing our nation ? Had not our ancestors remained ever true to his statutes ? Had we not suffered in Egypt the necessary schooling to fit us for this great object ?

And what is more, have we not answered the purpose of our selection? Ask of the civilized world, who were the heralds of civilization!—Ask of the philanthropist, who first taught mercy to mankind!—Ask the philosopher, who first proclaimed the unity of God!—Ask the preacher, where he derives his system of beneficent morality and religion which he upholds!—and all must answer, if they speak the truth, it is from the Israelites that all these blessings have flowed unto mankind; no other nation had a hand in laying the foundation of these great benefits; and they again have derived all from the Supreme Teacher, for not the most profound wisdom and experience of men could ever devise any thing half so good and beautiful.—And therefore says the Bible :

וּאֲתַכֶּם לָקַח ה' וַיּוֹצֵא אֶתְכֶם מִכּוּר הַבְּרִזְלִים מִמִּצְרַיִם  
 לֵהֵיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם נַחֲלָה כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה : דְּבָרִים ד' כ' :

“But you the Lord has taken and brought you out from the iron furnace from Egypt, to be to Him a nation of inheritance, as we see this day.”

Deuteronomy iv. 20.

The perfect reasonableness of all we have just advanced, supported as it is by revelation, experience, and common sense, will be sufficient to answer the first objection, although much more can be said, the subject being far from exhausted, by the few illustrations which I have laid before you. But the space, which an address ought to occupy prevents me from going into the matter more in detail at present, although it is highly probable, that I may recur to it at another time.—We will, therefore, now proceed to the second objection: “What have the Israelites gained by their selection?” We are asked, where are our palaces?—where our splendid temples?—where our kings?—where our national government?—and what gain has a Jew by maintaining his identity, living as he does among the multitude who differ from him in laws, in habits, and in feelings?—To these questions, we answer, if national grandeur is to be the sole criterion of the importance of a people, we have no importance to boast of; and what is more, it is extremely doubtful if ever we had many splendid buildings in the height of our glory, as but one temple



was permitted; and in vain does any one inquire for the existence of stupendous works of art which properly belong to us alone. Our kings have in truth long ceased to reign, and our national government has been dissolved, and our people scattered to all climes of heaven. Of power on earth, of importance among nations we have no share, not even the smallest if properly viewed, any further than the wealth of a few individuals has ever been able to afford us.—But if we come to the benefits of the mind—to the elevation of the soul—to a purity of worship—to hopes of a glorious futurity—there, indeed, we are blessed above all tongues and nations! What care we for palaces as marks of glory? whilst we have the precious law as our portion; what can nations boast of their splendid temples? when our house of God, the house of prayer for all nations, will one day be rebuilt in splendour, far outshining all earthly glory; what care we for kings—for governments? when we daily see the power passing away from the powerful, and the sceptre hourly wrenched out of the hands of princes. But we have in our scattered state even a bond of union which binds our hearts to our God and holds us in unseen embrace as one people; which makes us observed and watched by all mankind; which opens for us the way to the favour of God; which unlocks for us the gates of salvation; which admits us daily and hourly into the portals of wisdom and the fear of the Lord—which, in short, confers all that can make an existence happy and useful; and this is the advantage, brethren, which is conferred by the law—the law given from Sinai; the law which has stood the tempests of oppression and the ravages of time—and yet stands unseared, with its lustre undiminished! And this law it is which makes us a great nation, a people assisted of the Lord, who is the shield of our salvation. Aye! truly now we look unsightly, our countenance is marred, our bodies are bruised by the blows of those that hate us, and we are regarded as struck by God and afflicted. But we need not fear, our countenance will be healed, our wounds will be bound up; and though the blows fall again and again upon our devoted heads, though ever so often despised, and called a people stricken for transgressions which we have not committed, and persecuted for sins not our own: yet the day

will come when it will be acknowledged that our sufferings have been cause of happiness to the nations, who then will see the effects arising from a disobedience to the Divine Will, and they will all accept the law which, infringed, made us unhappy, and which obeyed once did, and will again, make us the light and the glory of the world. In the meantime let storms assail us—let us be derided for our littleness—let kings and nations attempt to stamp upon and extinguish the small remnant: the end of us will be far happier than theirs, and we will be great when the names of our adversaries will only be remembered as curses and as warnings. Like the mighty river whose source is so small that the foolish may deem he can obstruct the fountain by placing his foot upon the insignificant orifice, or over whose slender rill, at its outset, the thoughtless schoolboy jumps to show that he can stride the mighty water; but which, at length, mingles its rushing waves with the flood of the ocean, and bears on its bosom the largest fleet, heedless of the attempted obstruction or of the childish ridicule: thus do we pursue, though alas! as unconsciously often as the lifeless river, our course towards better times, but which we retard by neglecting the duties which would cause us to live and prosper if we would be mindful of them;—yet even in this way do we instruct the world, and like the stream which makes fruitful its banks and blesses thus the country through which it runs, we bestow the waters of life everlasting upon the nations of the earth, in whose lands we now live. If we are then asked, what advantages we have for opposing ourselves to the opinions of the majority? we answer, we only fulfil our destiny, the object of the call of our father Abraham, to whom God said; “All nations of the earth shall through thee be blessed.” This certainty is too sweet to be exchanged for worldly goods or for offices on earth! Let the nations then be ever so great; let them lord it over our people, and be it ever our lot to be the humble, the poor, the despised Jews: yet are we ever the greatest, and most wonderful and beneficial community, as from us and from our holy Bible light, and civilization, and morality, and love of God, have spread for ages, and will continue so to extend these blessings till it be accomplished what was the original intention of God.

Thus it came to pass, that we have stood the storms which have at all times assailed us ; for it was our God who always watched over us, and no empire ever so mighty and wise can prevail against Him. This was strikingly exemplified when the Syrian king, Antiochus, swept like a whirlwind over Judæa ; the righteous mourned, for the brave were slain ; and the priests wept in private, for the altar was desolate. A heathen worship was proclaimed, and it was death to call upon the Lord of heaven. If ever our religion was seemingly nigh its downfall, it was surely at that dark period, when the foreign enemy and the infidels at home conspired to destroy the sanctuary and to uproot the seeds of righteousness.—But He who throneth in heaven smiled, the Lord looked upon the noise of the heathens with contempt, and He smote them, as it were with an iron staff, and shivered them like potter's ware. And He raised unto the remnant of Jacob's house a helper from among them, and Judah Maccabeus avenged the house of God defiled, the altar broken, and the worshippers slaughtered ; and in grateful remembrance of the mighty deliverance from annihilation, the eight days of *Hanuckah* were instituted as a memorial for everlasting. Since that period, our enemies have not pretermitted their exertions ; they still have taken counsel against the Lord and his chosen people ; but all their efforts have resulted in utter discomfiture ; and though they have succeeded in gaining the interested and timid, the great multitude of us have either met their death in defence of our law, or have lived whilst steadfastly maintaining it. And a Titus and a Hadrian, though one burnt the temple, and the other passed the plough over Jerusalem, a host of persecutors armed with physical and spiritual terrors, the horrid inquisition, and lastly, the subtle associations who, with the power of worldly wealth, or the allurements of offices and distinctions, attempted to call off our brethren from their allegiance to God—have all shared an equal disappointment, and they have all had to acknowledge that it is useless to attempt a war with Heaven. And thus said David :

ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ אשר הלכו אלהים  
לפרות לו לעם ולשום לו שם : שמואל ב' ז' כג' :

“ And where is a single people on earth like thy people Israel, for whose sake a deity has gone to redeem them to him as a people, and to make himself a name.” 2 Samuel vii. 23.

It will thus be seen, that our selection was made for the purpose of rendering the name of God glorious among the nations, and to bring all mankind ultimately to the knowledge of the righteous way ; as the prophet says : “ And the nations shall go by thy light and kings by the brightness of thy shining ;” and the period when this will be accomplished will be a time of universal peace, and of the reign of a knowledge of the Lord. Is this object of sufficient importance to have warranted the Supreme Wisdom, to select unto himself a people peculiarly beloved above all others ? and is a destiny thus glorious not sufficiently great to make every Israelite feel gratified at the knowledge of belonging to the descendants of Abraham ? Surely, brethren, if we are not totally immersed in the whirlpool of selfishness and pursuits of vain aggrandizement : we must be satisfied, even without worldly splendour, with the consciousness that our beautiful system will survive all existing institutions, and that the remotest posterity of our tyrants and oppressors shall at length be brought to bow before the same altar with the children of Israel. It behoves, therefore, that every Hebrew do his share towards sanctifying God’s name, and endeavour to fulfil the prediction of the prophet : “ And I will be great, and sanctified, and be known before the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord !” And do you, my brethren, who listen now to me, impress it deeply on your minds, and tell it to your friends and to your children, that not yet has it become of no moment to belong to the chosen people ; but that neither is it enough to be only a Jew by name. No ! we should rise from our supineness, avow boldly our sentiments, not fear to be ridiculed because we thank God in our prayers, that He has chosen us from all nations ; and act just so as this proud eminence demands of us. Let us support the cause of religion, teach its precepts, and never omit any opportunity to display our confidence in our heavenly Father, and our subjection to his will.

Most merciful One, who hast ever been so kind and boun-

teous to thy people, continue always to foster and protect them, and let them find grace and mercy in thy presence, whenever their prayer ascends to thy abode in heaven. Amen.

Kislev 30th. }  
December 12th. } 5594.

NOTE.—The continuation of this address will be found under Discourse XXXII.—Soon after the above was written, I was seized with a fearful malady, which prevented me from continuing my labours till after a long and painful interruption. I do not wish to drag myself personally before the public; but I cannot refrain from mentioning, that being supposed on the point of death, my only brother hastened from a distance to my bedside. It pleased our heavenly Father to afflict him with the same disease. Although robust, and to all appearance of that physical construction, as to render his long surviving me almost a matter of certainty: he yet sunk under his sufferings, and tranquil and resigned he breathed out his pure spirit in the hands of Him who gave it, in the twenty-fifth year of his age; beloved by many, and hated by none.—The recollection of his death is doubly agonizing, because he had to receive from friendly strangers the kindness and attention that ought to have been rendered by his brother, who was kept from his couch of sickness by sufferings of unspeakable intensity and horror.—I ask the indulgence of the reader for this digression; but I could not let this opportunity pass, without passing a slight tribute to one so worthy and innocent as was my deceased, my only brother, Jacob Leeser.

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## DISCOURSE XXXI.

### THE DUTY OF ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE.

O MOST merciful One, who sendest succour to the afflicted, and protectest the helpless, grant us thy protection and deliver us from evil, and judge us not according to our unworthy deeds, but according to thy goodness, which is everlasting. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

We are taught in the books of Holy Writ, not to look upon this life as the chief period of our existence; nor upon the goods of the earth, the material possessions, as the greatest acquirement; nor, lastly, upon sensual pleasures as the highest enjoyment.—And seeing that every thing here below is transitory, even the most careless observer is very apt to acquiesce in the idea, that life is short and its pleasures uncertain; yet there are few, indeed, who are led on to a virtuous and godly life through a contemplation of the vicissitudes to which they are subject. Indeed, if we look at the haste with which we all run after gain; the efforts we make to lay up treasures, and the perseverance with which we pursue to our dying day the phantom pleasure: we should be led to suppose, that we believed ourselves thus engaged in fulfilling the object of our existence. And to confess the truth, many, if not all of us, think they have done every thing that was demanded of them, if their wealth has increased a hundred-fold; if their houses are splendid; if their appointment is grand, and if the voice of mirth is never ceasing in their habitation! They say: “Life is short, let us, therefore, enjoy its sweets;” and this heartless philosophy is in this manner the cause of many a life fooled away in vain pursuits and in endeavours which leave the soul wofully deficient in those riches which are to gain her an entrance into everlasting happiness. And yet what are riches? Who has ever found his thirst for gold entirely gratified by immense possessions? And say, what is power? Who was ever so powerful, but he sighed for more worlds to conquer? And speak, what is pleasure? When pain lurks among enjoyment, and death rears his visage where all are gay? It is in this spirit that David said (Psalm xxxix. 13): “Hear my prayer, O Lord! list to my cry; be not silent to my tears; for a stranger I am with Thee, a settler like all my forefathers.” Here the inspired Psalmist expresses his ideas of his existence on earth. “For a stranger I am with Thee;” we are like strangers, that enter an unknown land, driven there by circumstances beyond their control, and who may be compelled to leave again as suddenly as they arrived, or at best after a

short warning. And let us understand the words "with Thee;" we are, whilst thus sojourning, under the supervision of Him who sent us, we are in his presence; for although unseen, He is felt every where, for though unperceived by the human senses, the whole world is full of his glory.—And, continues David: "A settler like all my forefathers." As our forefathers were here permitted to act their part and then were hidden from view, removed from amidst the living: so are we tolerated strangers, suffered to take our abode for a time, a very brief space of time like those who went before us, till our day of removal also arrives, when we are hurried away, no matter how many engagements of business are incompleting, how many houses left unfinished; no matter if the festive meal be not half devoured, whilst yet, perhaps, the mandate of the potent has scarcely been uttered to do some mighty work; whilst yet the orator's words are on his lips, and whilst the foot of beauty enchants the eye, even of envy, by its evolutions in the mazes of the dance. Why then should the spirit of mortal be proud? Or rather, why should he not endeavour to live according to the will of Him, with whom he is a stranger? in whose world he is a sojourner? through whose goodness he lives?—This consideration brings us to the whole subject of active religious duties, which consist not merely in abstaining from doing harm, nor even in bestowing the superfluous and doing that which is easy of accomplishment; but in a constant labour in the way of goodness, in sacrificing interest, and in doing things unpleasant and even contrary to our inclinations, if they should chance to present themselves as a part of the work to be performed.—But some one may ask: "Can religion then consist for the greatest part of self-denials and sacrifices of our interest?" Certainly; and this is the reason why a religion was revealed, to enable us to know when we ought to act counter to our inclination, and when to sacrifice our possessions to the service of God. Of our own accord we could not know, that we are bound to give charity, to assist the sick, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to bury the dead. For although it is very consonant with the finer feelings of our nature, to be engaged in these holy offices of kindness: still we find that there are some who not only abstain from fulfilling these duties, but who do

just the opposite; they refuse charity to the poor, and even rob the orphan and the widow, so as to render them dependent upon a merciless world; some are so callous as to plunder the wounded soldier on the field of deadly combat, and answer his cry for water to quench his thirst, made intolerable by burning fever, by a thrust with the dagger; the miser will turn the shivering son of misery unheeded from his door; and many will refuse the last rights of humanity to the departed, because he is indebted to them for a little silver. All this proves, that human nature required a guide to show it what is right and pleasing in the eyes of God. And even if we reject the above examples, by saying, that of extreme cases of depravity it is unfair to draw general rules as to the necessity of a revelation: still we may freely say, that the religious duties, properly so called, as the observance of the Sabbath, the restitution of lands in the fiftieth year, the release of all bondmen, and many other laws, although in themselves strictly political (not to mention the purely ceremonial) laws, are not the natural offspring of unassisted reason. But we wander from our subject; all I meant to demonstrate is, that religion in every instance is a guide to the feelings by which they are to be regulated; and to attain perfection (in as far as this quality is compatible with our nature) we should fill our minds with those ideas which are best calculated to induce an acquiescence in the divine will. Now, where the duties demanded of us are mere *pleasant* exercises of humanity, it will require but little effort to be religious; for instance, the welcoming of strangers; the joyous reception of a bride; the restoring of peace between offended brothers; still these acts are in obedience to the dictates of the law, and we must, therefore, believe that reward will follow our execution of them. But there are other deeds of humanity to which many may, perhaps, be indisposed from mere affection; and, consequently, to act in obedience to the will of Heaven in this respect, requires more or less an effort to subdue unhallowed feelings, and to yield ourselves to superior guidance. Among duties of this kind, we may enumerate the redemption of prisoners, the buying in of a relative's field; the remission of debts in the sabbathic year; restitution of property unlawfully obtained; the restoring of pledges to the



debtor before sundown; and many other duties enumerated in the law. Still, though repugnance may be felt to the exercise of these precepts, they are, strictly speaking, moral laws in contradistinction to the religious ordinances; and since they may be unpalatable to many, we find the law of God reminding us of the obligation we are under to fulfil them, and giving us also reasons, *why* we should be careful of their observance. It will easily strike you, brethren, what sinful feeling stands in the way, when we are told to redeem from bondage a fellow-being. It is avarice, however refined; we speak not of where an actual inability exists; but where one has the means in his possession and hesitates, because he may allege that he need not spend his money for a friend, who may never be able to repay him, or if able, may be ungrateful enough to suffer him to lose by his humanity; and he, perhaps, will also fancy to himself, that his means are no more than he wants for his own use, and that he cannot spare the least of them for the service of his Maker, and the benefit of his fellow-man. Observe, a personal unwillingness to do a duty of humanity never enters into the consideration; this is always kept out of view, to satisfy an uneasy conscience, and to excuse a duty pretermitted; and provided we can colour our selfishness with a sufficient show of argument, we are perfectly easy, as though we had done all that could reasonably be demanded of us. But, though we may thus succeed in imposing upon the credulity of others and even upon ourselves, for by a series of false reasoning every man may lay a flattering unction to his soul: we shall, nevertheless, not be altogether successful, for there is One that searcheth the heart, and knows the thoughts of man, though they be vain. And thus, even if we blind ourselves by talking of an inability to comply, of ingratitude in those to be served, or the like: we can never be able to hide the deformity of an indulged avarice from our heavenly Judge. And if we weigh his omniscience against our desire to retain what is once ours, we no doubt will be willing to satisfy his demands, since we are not able to escape his superintendence. Farther, we should consider, that it is by no means certain, that we are not to lose the very amount we withhold, even if we should not be deprived of all that we value so highly. I

need not tell you, that of hundreds born in affluence the majority perhaps die in want—experience teaches that; and if we inquire, how does it happen that industry and means employed by one man do not yield the return which they yielded to another: we shall be answered, the means of the one were blessed by God, from those of the others the blessing was withheld.—Now, how can a man suppose that it will be in his power to keep what he once possesses, even by the greatest exertion of avarice, when the power of the Bestower of wealth stands opposed to him? And assume that he may succeed, that all his plans yield the expected return, as the fruit of his good calculation; what has he at last obtained? The favour of God? No, for he cared not to spend his wealth in his service! But he has acquired masses of shining metal; fine houses in many a noble city; lands rich in fruitfulness; ships which cover the ocean, and many obedient servants and fawning sycophants eager for the refuse of his table. Can his expectations go farther? and if they do, can they be farther gratified? He has worshipped an idol, and it was given him; what more can he ask? but he cannot remain with this idol for ever, and his wealth is left behind him to be dissipated by a careless spendthrift, or to be the bone of contention between disappointed heirs; or even if he leaves it for charitable purposes, it is extremely probable that his mind has become so contracted by pursuits of gain, that he is unjust to the living after his death, and he leaves those unprovided for who have a natural claim on his bounty. But go yet farther and say, that his wealth should be fairly and honourably divided, and that perfect satisfaction should follow the division; still what merit can he have for his charity, when it was only bestowed when he could no longer clutch it within his iron grasp? Can this be pleasing to God?—But observe, that, hitherto, we have assumed a uniform good luck (as it is termed) attending the efforts of him who refuses to give his bread to the poor, and his money to the needy; but we all know that success is not a necessary consequence of this line of conduct, any more than that poverty is the concomitant of liberality.—The question then arises: Since success is not always attending upon saving, but upon the blessing of God, shall we expose ourselves to the punishment of being

deprived of what we value so much by a refusal to comply with the conditions upon which we were appointed, so to say, trustees under the gift of God, to administer for the portion of our existence on earth a share of such worldly riches as may come into our hands? And says the prophet (Malachi iii. 10): "Bring ye all the tenth part into the treasury-house, that it may serve as provision in my house; and prove me, I pray you, in this, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out over you blessing without measure. (11th verse): And I will keep off for you the devouring insect, that it may not destroy for you the fruit of the earth; and not unfruitful shall be unto you the vine in the field, says the Lord of hosts." We thus see that we are promised worldly success, if we comply with the demands of the law; and if we give the tenth part of the produce of the earth to the Levite, share our money with the poor, and be as it were angels and ministers of comfort on earth: we are told that the windows of heaven shall be opened to shower blessings down without measure. The earth then shall not be devastated by blight and locust, and richly shall the vineyard repay the vintner's toil. Is the condition not such that even avarice would ask no more? And can we doubt the fulfilment of the promise, when we truly see that the seed of the righteous are blessed, and that his children never want for bread?—But discard altogether worldly success, admit that the bounty bestowed upon the poor, the time spent in personal deeds of humanity as actually lost to worldly gain: that you are so much the poorer by having on sixty Sabbath-days in the year abstained from labour and pursuits of gain; what, I ask you, can you allege as a valid reason against obedience to the law, when you reflect that by so doing you gain the favour of God, the good-will of men, and a tranquil mind. The favour of God! imagine only that you are laying up for yourselves treasures imperishable; beatitude unending; bliss without measure! And by what means? by gratifying the nobler feelings of your nature, feelings, which at best are the chief distinguishing characteristics between man and beast. And what feelings do you mortify? avarice, cruelty, and envy; And what do you sacrifice? money, earthly treasures, things in themselves nothing, and only valuable in as far as they may be

the means of doing good.—And whom do you serve? yourselves; for all the benefit of virtuous actions will be yours; God's happiness cannot be increased by any thing you can bestow, nor can you injure Him by any misdeeds of yours.—And who is it that begs of you to try his truth? It is the Giver of all, to whom all is indebted for its daily food; as the Psalmist says (cxlv. 15–16): “The eyes of all look with hope towards Thee, and Thou givest them food in its time. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfied all that lives with beneficence.” And even were a man ever so wealthy, were his means so ample that his wealth could not be consumed in his lifetime, nor in the lifetime of his children: still it is God who sendeth the rain to refresh the earth, who blesses the seasons, and crowneth the summer with fruitfulness.—And who at last requires it of you to neglect feelings of selfishness in obedience to his laws?—It is the Author of all, He in whom the world exists; the Sovereign of the universe, the Omnipotent Proprietor of the land, the King, in whose dominions you are strangers and tolerated settlers. And thus we read in the portion of the law read this day:

וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית הז לא נזרע ולא  
 נאסף ארז תבואתנו: וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה  
 הששית ועשת את התבואה לשלש השנים: וזרעתם את  
 השנה השמינית ואכלתם מן התבואה ישן עד השנה  
 התשיעית עד בוא תבואתה תאכלו ישן: והארץ לא תמכר  
 לצמיתת כי לי הארץ כי גרים ותושבים אתם עמרי:  
 ויקרא בה' ב'—כג':

“And if you say, what shall we eat in the seventh year? behold we may not sow nor gather in our fruit. But I will command my blessing to you in the sixth year, and it shall produce the necessary fruit for the three years. And when you sow in the eighth year, you shall eat of the old; till the ninth year, till its harvest is housed you shall eat of the old. And the land shall not be sold away as property, for mine is the land, for strangers and settlers you are with me.” Leviticus xxv. 20–23.

In this text are answered all the objections which the timid, the avaricious, and the obstinate can raise against the compliance

with the law.—To the timid and avaricious, God says : “I will command my blessing to you” for compliance. He who fears to starve, because he neither sows nor reaps, is thus assured that famine and deprivation will not happen, because the land lies idle ; and the covetous one is notified that he will best consult his interest by doing as commanded, for thus alone will his labour be blest with immense increase.—And to the obstinate one, God says : “ The land shall not be sold away as property, for mine is the land,” in reply to an objection he might raise against the provision of the law which says, that at the Jubilee every piece of land shall revert to the original owner. He might say : “ The land is my own, why shall I be prevented from exchanging it for money, if I please : ” to this he is answered that the land is not his, but merely a trust, permitted him by the real Owner of the soil, the Sovereign Lord of all, and the Legislator of Israel.—To explain at present the happy political effect this provision must have upon a people like the Israelites were in Palestine, by preventing the growth of a few immense estates to the detriment of the many, would detain us too long ; but enough for our purpose is to mention, that it evidently proceeded from a view to render the nation as nearly as possible equal, that all might be equally free ; and nothing therefore is more true, than what was said in another place, that the Mosaic legislation was intended and well calculated to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number. A law so wise, so entirely based upon the purest principles of philanthropy ought to be dear to us ; and let us therefore endeavour to do all that is yet left to us to do. The sabbathic year is, alas ! abolished by our dispersion ; the trumpet of the Jubilee no longer proclaims liberty and freedom to the land and to all the inhabitants thereof ; the festive pilgrims no longer crowd thy highways, O land of Israel ! but still we are left fully able to exercise charity to the poor, to comfort the afflicted, to love our fellow-men like ourselves, and to keep the festivals of the Lord, and to celebrate weekly with devotion and abstinence from labour the Sabbath of rest, in honour of the Lord—undismayed by the paltry loss of gain—mindful that it is an institution of the Creator of all, an emblem of everlasting rest in heaven, and a memorial that we were servants in Egypt, and that

we were redeemed thence by Him, who has bought us as his servants.

O Father! guide us in the way of holiness, and enlighten our souls with thy wisdom, and shield us from evil during our appointment on earth. And when our pilgrimage is ended, when our task is done : O then receive us, Thou Holy One in thy paternal embrace, there to rest in happiness to eternity. Amen.

Iyar 14th. }  
 May 23d. } 5594.

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## DISCOURSE XXXII.

### THE SELECTION OF ISRAEL.

SOVEREIGN of the universe! we adore Thee, because of thy great goodness and glory which Thou hast full often displayed over us thy people. From Egypt Thou didst redeem us, and didst hear our cries amid our afflictions, because Thou wert mindful of the covenant Thou hadst made with our ancestors, who walked before Thee in humility and devotion, when darkness surrounded the earth and all its inhabitants. After Thou hadst rendered us free from earthly tyranny, Thou further didst manifest thyself to us, and didst deliver to us thy law resplendent with purity and holiness, and thus Thou madest our minds also free, and ourselves the subjects to thy holy will ; and in this manner Thou didst surround us with a shield of power, defending us from the contamination of surrounding nations. Our tongues are too feeble to express our thanks, our words are insufficient to declare thy goodness, and our minds are lost in the contemplation of thy infinite wisdom. O then may it be thy will, Everlasting One, to accept with favour the

insufficient words of our mouths, the humble thoughts of our hearts, as the only offering we can bring upon the altar of a contrite heart, which Thou hast promised through the mouth of thy prophets, Thou wouldst never despise. And protect farther thy people, and defend them from the attacks of their adversaries, and fortify their hearts, so that they may live and serve Thee, till Thou sendest thy anointed one to promulge thy law to all the ends of the earth, when all will serve Thee in purity and holiness ! Amen.

### BRETHREN !

On a former occasion we proposed three questions for examination ; the first was : “ Is it reasonable to suppose that God should select Israel as his peculiar people ? ” the second embraced the inquiry : “ Granted that the selection was reasonable, what advantage did the Israelites gain thereby ? ” and the third was : “ Whether the Israelites had been rejected after having been once chosen ? ”—The two first questions were amply discussed, objections stated and refuted ; and we came to the conclusion, that it is perfectly reasonable and consonant with the wisdom of God to believe, that He educated our ancestors to be worthy to become his servants by a long period of servitude in the land of the children of Ham, teaching them by a mighty display of his omnipotence, that he is the God to whom alone adoration is due from all mankind. This education was, as we have seen, intended to form a people on whom a permanent impression could be made, and who would be willing, at all times and under all circumstances, to serve the God who had redeemed them ; and thus to be for all ages the depositary of the law of God, and a shining light to the nations of the earth.—In answer to the second question, we have clearly demonstrated, that a selection by Supreme Wisdom for a purpose so grand is advantage enough, nay, more than any other advantage which we can enjoy as individuals or as a nation. Only think, that the exertions each of us makes in the service of God redounds not only to our own advantage, but also to the civilization and redemption of the universe from the misrule of superstition and false worships. Surely, an end so great, so universally beneficial, is an object for the promotio

of which the Almighty might well be supposed to exert his wisdom and his care, and a boon sufficiently great to be desired by the most exalted people. This is a brief outline of the arguments employed to answer the first questions consonantly with the assumption of the Israelites, that they were chosen as the depositary of the divine will, and that they have just cause to be thankful for his benefit thus bestowed, despite of its having exposed them at all times to the envy and persecution of the nations among whom they dwell.—Let us now proceed to examine by the light of Holy Writ and common reason the assertion of our opponents: “That, though we were once the chosen people, we have ceased to be so since a definite period of time; or, as they say, Israel the descendant of Jacob is no longer the spiritual Israel.” The consideration of this question involves, as you will easily observe, something of a controvertial nature, and therefore you may suppose that it is not properly a subject with which we should engage in a public religious discourse; but still it is one vitally important to us as Jews, and in my examination thereof, which I propose laying before you, I shall confine myself to the abstract question, and if what may be said controverts the doctrines of other sects, it shall be done without either attacking them or noticing the books from which they are drawn and upon which they are founded. I may as well remark in this place, that in treating upon any topic of our religion, and in answering objections raised against it, it is quite sufficient to answer merely such objections, without reverting to the doctrines of any system different from ours; for our religion, not alone that its excellence is above any other, but it dates also prior to any other; and consequently, we may argue the subject as though no other rule of faith existed.—But in some cases it may be necessary to advert to systems differing from or adverse to ours, when it may tend to confirm ourselves the more strongly in our belief: when it is perfectly fair to discuss the subject controversially; for this is the only way by which truth can be sifted from error. I do not, however, think it at all necessary to offer an apology for the mode of discussion which I have adopted: only to point out to you the reasons which usually have swayed, and shall in future sway me in the elucidations of our



holy law which I may have offered, or may yet continue to offer to your serious reflection.

Let us proceed with our examination of the question proposed: "Are the Israelites descended from Jacob the true spiritual Israelites, or have they been rejected after their having been once chosen?" To come to a clear understanding on this very important subject, it is first necessary to know what is meant by *selection*, and next by the term *rejection*.—When we say, that we were selected as the people of God we mean to say, that we were selected, chosen, elected, or withdrawn from among the multitude of nations, separated from an affinity with them in their adoration of airy nothings, and set apart to be servants to the Most High, and subject to his law. It makes no difference by what word we designate this action of God, whether we call it a selection, choice, election, or withdrawal; it was either or rather all combined; we say we were selected, because God in his supreme knowledge knew the disposition of our people to be best adapted for his purposes, as we read in Deuteronomy xxxi. 21: "And it shall come to pass when the many evils and plagues find him (Israel), then shall this song answer against him as evidence, for it (the song, and consequently the law in which it is contained,) shall not be forgotten from the mouth of his descendants; for I know his inclination, as he does this day, before yet I have brought him into the land which I have sworn."—This knowledge caused Him to choose us then from among the nations. He elected us to be his people by withdrawing us from the wickedness which overspread the earth. Now, from what has been said, it must be self-evident that this choosing was for no other purpose than a moral good, and not to make us worldly great; and consequently, Israel can be the chosen servant, although he be poor, although he be a captive in a strange land. It is not to be denied that we were promised prosperity and peace, if we would be obedient to the commandments; but all of us know, how much ease and freedom from the cares of poverty enable the mind to be more devoted to the refined cares for the welfare of the soul, since it has not then to wear itself out with a constant chafing against the ills of life. So that worldly blessings were promised as the means for the furtherance of the

grand ulterior object, that is, to raise up a holy people, obedient in thought, word, and deed to the will of God. As we read (Deut. xxvii. 18-19): "And the Lord has avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as He has promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep his commandments; and to make thee high above all the nations which He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, and that thou mayest be a holy people to the Lord thy God, as He has spoken." We thus see, that the reason of the selection was two-fold; first, to become through obedience holy to God, and, secondly, to deserve happiness and to reach felicity through holiness.—The question now arises: "Was this holiness to be permanent or temporary?" By holiness is meant, no more than an obedience to the divine will so often and so uniformly exercised, as to invest the doers thereof with a peculiar capacity to merit, and to receive, the favour of God; and to resist more easily, than others not doing so or not so far advanced, the pressure of temptations; and to subject ourselves with more readiness and cheerfulness to whatever good or evil the Almighty may bestow; not to rise above ourselves when successful, nor to sink into gloom and despair when reverses come over us. It is, moreover, evident, that if any course of life, being in conformity to the once declared will of God, confers this state of holy feelings at one period of the world, it must continue to exert the same influence to the end of time. Or, in other words, since it was declared to be leading a holy life in the time of Moses, if a man acted conformably to the law revealed from Sinai: it follows, that to act according to the same law at this moment is also leading a holy life, unless it can be demonstrated, that at any one time since the promulgation of the Decalogue, the Almighty descended in his glory and solemnly abrogated the law He there so solemnly enacted, when our forefathers stood at the foot of Sinai and saw the lightning flash, heard the thunder roll, and felt the mountain move. But where do we find any evidence of such an occurrence? At what period was there such a display of universal, public, and intelligible legislation of a new code? Truth will say: "At no time, in no place." And as the law was enacted for the purpose of being obeyed, or else its enactment would have been useless, and as at no time it has been

abolished: to observe its precepts is leading a holy life; and consequently, Israel will be a holy people, if they continue to live according to the dictates of divine holiness. To sum up all that has been said above, in a few words, we may state: that the giving of the law was the virtual selection of Israel, and an obedience to this law confers upon Israel the just appellation of God's peculiar people, since at no time has any other people acted according to the law given to them, and never could show any reason, why another law should be considered as the divine legislation.

We must now examine what can be meant by "Israel is rejected?" From the preceding it must be evident that Israel's rejection can only be imagined as at all possible by a promulgation of a new code of laws, by refusing which they place themselves out of the pale of divine favour. Further, the evidence of such a promulgation must be so clear as to leave no doubt upon our minds as to its correctness. But to imagine even that a new code would or could be given, is to admit a caprice in the divine will, a vacillation in the judgment of God, which, far be such thought from us, would invest the Divine Essence with all the imperfections of humanity; whereas we are clearly told, that "God is no man that He could lie, and not a son of man that He could repent." Our assumption, therefore, based as it is upon reason and revelation, would in itself alone be sufficient to do away with the necessity for any further argument. Yet where there are objections raised it is proper to give them their utmost weight, the more radically to remove them. So then, admit that a new legislation were possible, still it must be confessed, upon an impartial investigation, that the fundamental principles of the moral and even of the ceremonial laws of our religion admit of no change. Let us take, for example, the first commandment proclaimed from Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God," which as you know is an announcement of our obligation to believe in a Divinity, everlasting, unchanging, and indivisible. Is it possible that any new code (even let it also emanate from God, which we however think impossible) could contain any thing at variance with this principle? Can God himself be at one time *אֵחָד*, *Adonai Echad*, the only everlasting Being, and cease to be so at another time? Aye, and

this is the essence of the law, to know that there is an only God, everlasting and unchangeable, Creator of all, Ruler of all, Good above all, and Just above all; who, though incomprehensible, exists through all eternity, and to whom our conceptions of time, age, and change are inapplicable.—Let us proceed to the second commandment and its specifications: “Thou shalt have no other gods; thou shalt not make thyself any image; thou shalt not bow down to them, and shalt not worship them.” This too is unchangeable in its nature. For as God is ever the same, so it must always be wrong, under any circumstance, to associate with Him, be his name praised for ever more, any other existing or imaginary being in worship, as by no contingency whatever can aught but the Creator and Father of all be God.—Again: “Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.” This precept too is immutable; from the words of the holy text it appears that its institution was based upon the history of the creation, and to for ever remind us, that after all had been created as now ordered around us in six days, the seventh was no day of creation, or, to use the words of Scripture: “After God had finished on the seventh day the work He had done, He rested on the seventh day from all the work He had done.” Now it is evident that the reasons assigned for the observance of the seventh day apply to no other day of the week, for all six were days of creation, and but the seventh alone a day of abstinence from work. In fact, the etymological meaning of the word Sabbath, from the Hebrew verb שבת (*shabote*), to cease, is *cessation*, and only by inference *rest*, for rest is the consequence of a cessation from labour. Another reason given for the observance of the seventh day is found in the repetition of the Decalogue (Deut. v. 15): “And thou shalt remember that thou wert a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out from thence, with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, therefore the Lord thy God has commanded thee to make the Sabbath-day.” The connection of this reason with the other, referring to the creation, has been explained by me in another place, and need therefore not be repeated here. But from the whole it will appear, that the institution of the seventh day of rest was to be permanent and unchanged, as the reasons given are also unchangeable, to wit, the creation in six

days and the redemption from Egypt, since things past are from their nature not liable to be changed, because what is once done cannot be undone; for even if the effect be removed the event itself has occurred. We therefore find in our prayers the following formula for the *kiddush* of the Sabbath: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and hast found delight in us; and hast caused us to inherit with love and favour thy holy Sabbath, as a memorial of the work of the creation; for it is the first of the days of holy convocation, in memory of our redemption from Egypt."—The precept "Honour thy father and mother," must find a place in any divine legislation. "Thou shalt not commit murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal;" "you shall not defile yourselves by any creeping thing;" "you shall not lie;" "not follow the ways of the people of Egypt;" and in fact all the prohibitions, and nearly all the positive commandments, will be found upon examination to be of that kind, that no law whatever, if of divine origin, could by any possibility gainsay them. The proof is easy, but would require more time than can be devoted to it now; and each of you can no doubt follow out the argument by your own reflection. Now it follows, that any law to be divine must be just such a one as we possess; and any law differing therefrom in any material point, must be, of necessity, *not* of divine origin. For it is impossible to conceive how both propositions can be true, that God is One, Eternal, Unchangeable, and Indivisible, and that He is divided, subject to change, and consisting of a plurality.—It cannot be said, that we must keep Sabbath on the seventh day, to celebrate weekly the wonder of the creation, and to change it to the sixth, first, or any other day, to celebrate any thing else.—It is incompatible with reason to admit that God instituted the prohibition of certain species of animals, because they would contaminate us, and for no reason that we can discover, to abolish the prohibition.—To institute the order of priesthood in the family of Aaron, and then to admit every one to the privilege, again without any reason.—To proclaim statutes and judgments as his will, and to revoke them at his caprice without any ground for such a change existing, at least such a ground as could satisfy

our reason.—But as God's ways are just, as in Him there is no fault nor evil, we must come to the conclusion, that such inconsistencies are not of his sanctioning, and that whatever of error there does exist is of human invention ; whatever of discrepancy to his law may be found has been introduced by men, and not by the All-wise, Unchangeable One.—But even yield all which our opponents can possibly demand ; admit for a moment that things can be changed : we would ask, where is the evidenee of such change ? where is the warrant for our departure from the ways of our ancestors ? We may safely say, that there is no book warranting a belief in a plurality of the deity, which claims to be of divine revelation ; there is no such code authorizing the transmutation of the Sabbath ; there is no law authorizing things prohibited in the Pentateuch. And if we admit the authority of *this* book, then it follows that unless there be a superior authority, no other law can claim our submission ; and as there is no other law, consequently the law of the *Torah* is yet, and will be, binding on us and all who may join us. If now it is meant by “ Israel is rejected,” that the law of Israel has ceased to be the law of God : then it has been already established beyond contradiction, that this position is false and erroneous. But if it is meant to be understood that we have ceased to be the favourite people of God, and that others acting differently from us have now become the elect : then we are also prepared with proof to rebut the assertion. Yet even say, that we no longer enjoy particular favour, aye, take all that is claimed, that the nations of the earth have been chosen : still we will reject all overtures to join ourselves to others, we will resist amalgamation with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might. No ! never be it said that we serve our God from interest, or that we are envious that others too are chosen, even if we be rejected. Would to God that all inhabitants of the earth were living in his service, walking before Him in fear, truth, and sincerity ; would that our eyes might see, our minds be convinced that the world were filled with true adorers, and even if we were, as we are now, poor, humble, trodden under foot, and despised. Aye, if annihilation of our national existence were to be the forfeit, let the partial evil be compensated by the universal good. Come then weal or wo, prosperity or

affliction, life or death, be it ours to uphold the true law ; let us be sunken but not degraded ; let us even from amidst the depth of affliction cry to our God, and proclaim aloud his wonders which He has done for our ancestors, in redeeming them from the bonds of slavery, and giving them a law to free their souls from the trammels of sin and the thralldom of superstition. But no ! Israel is not rejected ! Israel is not cast off ! Israel is yet the chosen people ; and the Israelites descended from Jacob are still the bodily as also the spiritual Israel.—For know that even at the time when through our great crimes we had doomed ourselves to punishment, at the very time when prophets, inspired by the Supreme Judge, denounced dispersion and captivity over us, Jeremiah spoke thus by divine inspiration :

כה אמר ה' אם ימדו שמים מלמעלה ויחקרו מוסדי  
הארץ למטה גם אני אמאם בכל זרע ישראל על אשר  
עשו נאם ה' : ירמ' לא' לו' :

“ Thus speaketh the Lord, If the heavens can be measured above, and the fastness of the earth be searched out beneath: then also will I reject the whole seed of Israel, for all which they have done, says the Lord.”

xxx. 37.

It were futile, and insulting to your understanding, to prove to you by demonstration that Israel here spoken of is the seed of Jacob, whom the Lord called Israel ; since the whole context evidently alludes to no other. It is therefore perfectly plain, that we are promised that, despite of our transgressions, we shall not be cast off utterly, nor ever be suffered to be lost among the nations ; as we also read in Lev. xxvi. 44 : “ And for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies I will not reject them, nor despise them to destroy them utterly, to break my covenant with them ; for I am the Lord their God.” Again a promise to the bodily Israel, who though in the land of their enemies shall not be totally rejected.

Having thus shown what is meant by the terms *selection* and *rejection*, it must strike you all, that it is perfectly reasonable and consistent with revelation to admit the first, but utterly

repugnant both to reason and revelation to admit the other. It is, nevertheless, very evident why it is constantly repeated that we are rejected; it is to induce us to forsake the God whom we adore, the law that we love; and to mingle with the nations, to become an integral part of the great mass of the human family, and no longer to exhibit the spectacle of a people, dispersed all over the earth, still one and united by a belief in the ancient faith, upholden by a hope of better days. But it is our duty to reject such calls, whatever advantages may be offered to us thereby; for we must be convinced from the whole tenor of our history, that we never can gain the favour of God by apostacy; that is, by forsaking that law which He has established as the standard of right.—Our opponents, however, say, that, if it were true, that we yet continue to be the chosen people, that if our law yet continued to be the law of God, we would not be suffered to be in captivity and dispersed in every corner of the globe; and they maintain that we are suffering, because we have rejected a better law, and have done certain wrongs which they lay as a sin against us. Now, these assertions might hold good, if a better law actually existed, or if it were true that our dispersion had not been foretold by our own prophets, denounced as an inevitable consequence of the non-observance of that very law, which it is alleged has been abrogated.—The first assertion we have already proved as unfounded, for no new law whatever has been promulgated, much less a better one; and to the second, we answer, that from Moses down to Malachi punishment has been denounced against transgression, both punishment in this life and after death; and by most of the prophets our very captivity and dispersion all over the earth have been especially predicted in the manner we see it before us this day. Whatever other crimes then we may have committed, it is sufficient to account for our situation by referring to the constant infraction of the Mosaic law, which we and our ancestors have been guilty of; and consequently we must infer, that a further dereliction will be still more signally avenged, for God is just and true, and no untruth and injustice can stand before Him. And let not the wicked flatter himself with the idea that he will escape the punishment under which Israel is suffering, by leaving the holy



church for a junction with the multitude; he will be, it is true, no longer a captive, at least in its own estimation; but there are other pains far more to be dreaded than even death itself inflicted by the persecutor for an adherence to the law.—No, brethren, the law of God is not abolished; Israel is not rejected; but only the light of the one is dimmed, because the other has sinned. But the day will come, when the lustre of both will be resplendent beyond compare, when God will be glorified, his law revered, and it be acknowledged by all, that we are God's people, a people faithful to the last, faithful in having so truly preserved the law entrusted as a deposit, amid so many difficulties; and faithful and true in having resisted for centuries of persecution, darkness, and worldly allurements, mingling with other nations, whose heart is not entire with the Lord our God. Then, indeed, will all the earth be an altar to the Lord; then, indeed, will He be declared, as in truth He is, the great King, whose glory fills the universe!

It is in our power to do much towards this great end by an observance of the law; and wherever there is in our captivity a temple of the Most High, there let us assemble, and proclaim that we will be persevering in the service of God till the end of time. Whenever then a new house of prayer is erected, let us regard it as an approach to the great end, as a step nearer to the glorious consummation, and let us upon every such occasion pray for the welfare of the community who have thus roused themselves to the service of the Lord.—The present holyday is, as you know, the anniversary of the promulgation of the law, and it has been chosen by a neighbouring congregation,\* as a fit time for the dedication of a new house of worship to the service of the Most High. Let us then pray for the welfare of that community, who have just finished the goodly work, and let us invoke blessing and prosperity upon their endeavours.

O Lord God, Father of mercy! we beseech Thee to regard with pleasure our exertions in thy holy service. Bless us and all those who call upon thy name; and O may it be thy will to infuse thy spirit of grace into the hearts of our brethren,

\* The Congregation Sheerith Israel of New York.

who have finished and dedicated to thy holy name, a house of assembly and prayer. Let thy goodness guide them ! let thy wisdom enlighten them ! and upon the building send thy glory, so that from its walls, and the walls of all other places where Thou art worshipped, light and salvation may spread forth to the ends of the earth. And may temple after temple spring up among thy children, till from the farthest East, to the utmost West, upon the great land and the islands of the ocean, thy name may be glorified from now and for ever. Amen.

Sivan 5th. }  
June 12th. } 5594.

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### DISCOURSE XXXIII.

#### THE BLESSING OF REVELATION.

To the God of truth, whose word is truth, be praise and glory from all ends of the earth, and may his name be glorified by all the children of men, from now and for ever. Amen.

#### BRETHREN !

How much have we to be thankful for to our great Father ! and how can we do enough to show our gratitude ! If we look upon ourselves as members of the human family at large, we will, and must, feel ourselves impelled by gratitude towards the Giver of light and life, who, in making man after his image, rendered him fit for the habitation of a spirit of wisdom and intellect ; and not only gave to his outward frame a beauty of form superior to that of any other animal, but also infused therein a soul, a living principle, an intelligent mind, a spark divine, towering above all in majesty and strength. But if

we go a step further and view ourselves not only as men in general, but as Israelites, we shall have yet more cause for an indulgence of our gratitude towards the Supreme Disposer of all. For though the human mind reaches wonderfully far by its own researches, and contains much by its natural organization: still without further assistance, emanating immediately from the Divine Essence, it is but too apt to be misled by the semblance of good, and is often induced to mistake the wrong for what is right, because its means of information are insufficient or inaccurate. Thus, the most wonderful and comprehensive intellect, when unassisted by instruction, is apt to be in error; since it is next to impossible, during our short stay on earth, to obtain correct data to form a correct judgment upon every occasion. And this was wisely so ordained; for since men are unequal in their capacity, the wise few would have obtained unlimited sway over their fellows; and as the wise too can be wicked, they might have dictated laws to the rest of mankind, whose utility, to say the least, might have been questionable. But now, as it is the fixed law of humanity, that we are liable to err, the assertions of every man, no matter how superior may be his endowments, will always be received with caution; and, therefore, if the good fail often of doing all the good they propose, the wicked are full as often thwarted in their evil endeavours. So we have in this case another exemplification of the fact, that there exists no evil which is not counterbalanced by an equal or even larger share of good. All this, however, goes to show, that human reason is fallible and of itself insufficient to perceive the light which it is able to acquire; and we find, therefore, that men who have even made great progress in inventions and acquirement of sciences and knowledge, have very often been swayed in their moral conduct by unbelief, superstition, or bigotry. That is to say, some wise men in worldly matters have had no adequate perception of the nature of the Deity, as we find it declared in Scriptures, nor could their morality be compared by the standard laid down in the law of God. Take, for instance, the greatest and best of heathen philosophers, Socrates, and admit that he proclaimed nothing but what his inventive genius taught him, and assume that there is no exaggeration in the accounts

we have of his virtues and resignation, of which latter, however, there must always be some doubt: still his notions of God were far from the ideas as we have them handed down to us through Moses. Socrates, as we are told, believed in a God, the Creator of the world, and the Judge of mankind; still he regarded the heathen gods as powers, though subordinate to the Supreme Being. Now, as I have said, Socrates, of all the heathens, approximated truth nearer than any other; and yet we find that he did not reach all the truth. He was by God endowed with great discernment, with acute perception, with reasoning powers of no common kind; still he lacked the direct revelation, and thus he remained imperfect, when he had arrived so far already, that the next step would have been truth itself. He might have argued, since God created all and judges all, he needs not the assistance of subordinate powers; and since He alone is perfect and supremely wise, He can have no associates in his dominion; as our beautiful hymn so elegantly says: "And He is One, and there is no second to be associated with Him in the government;" and consequently, no other being, save God alone, deserves the worship of man. Nevertheless, with all his powers of reasoning, Socrates missed the great end; he imagined, as said, a Creator, associated with beings of an inferior, yet of a substantial and active power, and he worshipped the idols of the Grecians, and respected their tenets. If now, the wisest of heathens erred so far, how miserable must have been the mental state of those not so greatly favoured! if a Socrates's reasoning was insufficient to teach true wisdom, where can we look for it among the great multitude? It is, therefore, that we Israelites should reflect upon the great benefit conferred upon us by the divine revelation, where we are taught truth without disguise, morality without alloy, and religion without superstition! The Bible teaches us to acknowledge the existence of a Being, infinite in time, and greatness, and wisdom, existing before any thing else existed; the Creator of matter, the Organizer of nature, the Preserver of all things created, and the Governor of nature as organized; further, that nature, organization, and in short, all existing things, and all the universe, are necessarily dependent upon Him, and upon Him alone, but that neither

they, nor any thing else which can be conceived, are necessary to his existence or his happiness. So that we can very easily imagine God as existing without organization of any thing material; but that it is utterly impossible to imagine a world without a Creator. This Creator so great is also wise beyond compare. He is the Author of wisdom, consequently He is the wisest of all. He exists in every thing, and every thing exists in Him; consequently the actions of all, and the thoughts of all are known to Him. And as his knowledge and greatness pervade all, it can cost Him no effort to effect any thing which may please his will, and it requires no application of industry to make himself acquainted with the thoughts and actions of his creatures.—This is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; He is the adored and adorable One, who displayed to us his power and his goodness; and He is the Legislator who dictated to the people that he had chosen the law which He desired them to observe, that through it they might obtain the enviable distinction of being the wisest of nations, and the people most nearly connected through actions of piety and holiness with their almighty Father.—We ought, therefore, to display, by all means in our power, our gratitude for these signal benefits, and we are ungrateful, if we omit any opportunity by which we can show that we are not undeserving of the law which was given us, that we might, by observing it, become a light to the nations of the earth. To prove that our religion is a benefit and not a task is almost useless; for what can be more apparent, than that a state of barbarism is far inferior to one of civilization; that civil liberty is immeasurably superior to political thralldom; that wisdom is preferable to folly; knowledge to ignorance, and, lastly, that mental light—devotion—piety—the love of God—peace, and contentment are to be preferred to mental darkness—superstition—immorality—idolatry—strife, and warfare! And the effects of our law are the good things we have enumerated, the want of it has ever produced the opposite effects; and though among heathens we meet with examples of virtue, disinterestedness, and humanity, still we find them so blended with grosser desires and superstitious practices, that we can by no means view the virtues as at all pertaining to heathenism; on the contrary, as exceptions some-

times met with, of evil even being occasionally the producer of good, or rather of evil not being altogether able to destroy totally the inclination to virtue and goodness. Besides, it must be borne in mind, that the Grecians and Romans, those nations of antiquity of whom we have the most authentic accounts, were in all likelihood greatly indebted for much of their knowledge of morality to the Bible, although it may not have reached them directly. It is well known, that for centuries anteceding the birth of Socrates there was a constant intercourse carried on between the countries of Asia Minor and Greece and its colonies. Many of the Grecians doubtlessly often appeared at the courts of the Persian kings and their satraps; these were all, more or less, acquainted with the Jews, and, therefore, the Jewish law also must have become known, and when known it must of necessity have attracted attention, if not admiration. Now, if even the Grecians never associated with the Jews directly, which is, however, too improbable to be believed, still they doubtlessly became familiar with the law, as said, at least second handedly. Further, it is likely, that a learned man catching a glimpse as it were of those sublime truths to which the mass of his countrymen were strangers, may have promulgated them, to increase his own importance, as an emanation of his own fertile invention, or as the special revelation of a deity or a demon, made known to him alone. However, we will not insist upon this hypothesis as a solution of the doctrines arrived at by the Greek philosophers, but merely to show to the unbeliever, that the existence of doctrines of a nobler cast than the vulgar superstition can be accounted for, on rational grounds, as being derived mediately or immediately from the great source of wisdom which now illumines the world; and let me add, that this point has been too much overlooked by those great admirers of heathen philosophy, who one would judge from their mode of speaking, had discovered in the remains of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, perfect substitutes for the sublime truths of revelation. It belongs not to our discussion in this place to view this subject in all its bearings, although a great deal more could be urged in favour of our views in connexion with this very topic. But even if we allow the intuitive knowledge of the learned

men of antiquity and of the present time, they merely prove the exceptions to the general rule, which we have so often laid down and maintained, that the Bible is the only source of true civilization and piety, and that every system, however great and ingenious, is far behind it in beneficial effects upon the general welfare and salvation of mankind.

Thus also it is not to be denied, that under the dominion of the Bible, or in other words in the theocratic state of the Israelites, crimes were committed, a state of warfare indulged in, violence perpetrated, and idolatry introduced ; but this was not in consequence of the divine legislation, but in palpable and open violation of it ; and how signally has this aberration been avenged ! Our sacred temple was levelled to the ground, our cities were burnt, our youths were led to the scaffold, our wise men stabbed and slaughtered, and our priests made the victims upon the very altar where they administered the sacrifices of the Lord ! The remaining few were led into captivity ; the light of the law has, through our sins, become dimmed ; the name of Israel has been rendered a reproach and a by-word ; and the worship of the Most High has, alas ! to our shame, be it spoken, been more and more looked upon with indifference ! We have been punished for our sins ; but instead of our repenting and acting differently from the conduct of our ancestors, who perished in their transgressions, we have added wilful wickedness to their trespasses, and thus perpetuated the wrath which had been poured out as a warning to others, as the admonishing voice of Heaven : “ Go ye and repent, and why will ye die, O house of Israel ! ” It will therefore be evident, that not by fault of revelation have crimes been multiplied, but in despite of its beneficent precepts ; and therefore the assertion made in the beginning of this address holds true, that we are bound by the strongest bonds of gratitude to testify our thanks to our almighty Redeemer for the great benefit of a revealed religion so bountifully bestowed, and to demonstrate ourselves not unworthy of a gift so great, which is to lead us in this life, which is to watch over us when we lay ourselves in the sleep of death, and which is to delight us when we awake to everlasting life, to unending blessedness ! Now, from the very nature of man, that is to say from his utter incapacity to render

God any benefit, the nature of the gratitude can easily be inferred, that is, man to show his being deserving of the gift we have just mentioned should actually prize it, look upon it as the best gift Heaven could bestow to bless mankind, and prove this regard by a due observance of the divine precepts. In short, Israel, to be truly grateful, should be truly a faithful, obedient, and pious people; no other means exist to prove that God's gift was not unworthily bestowed. But unfortunately a change has come over the face of the earth, and the dark ages of superstition, of intolerance and persecution have been succeeded by the more direful one of unbelief, of irreligion, and licentiousness; and a rational belief and a filial devotion to our God and Father, are looked on with contempt, and the servants of God are held in little repute, their doctrines find but unwilling listeners, and religion is, to use the emphatic words of Scripture, thrown behind the back of each of us as something too insignificant to deserve the attention of a race so far advanced in science and knowledge as to be beyond instruction, as too elevated to need to be taught of Heaven. This is a severe picture, but to our shame be it said, a true one nevertheless of the spirit of our age, and of that which has immediately preceded us. Doctrines have been promulgated, and promulgated too with a zeal which would have graced a holy cause, which, if followed up in general practice, would totally subvert religion, would sever as it were the bond which unites man to God, and would cast loose the ties of civilized society, and would give free vent to an unbridled action of the basest passions. Aye, and we Israelites especially have felt the sting of the serpent of unbelief which has been so dreadfully active; we, who of all men should have been the best prepared to resist, we have yielded ourselves basely, have been overcome without a struggle almost. It is useless to flatter ourselves, that we are not open to the reproach of shameful dereliction from the good ways of our ancestors, for we have retrograded, and fallen off with dreadful rapidity from the path of righteousness.—Apostacy also has become so common, as scarcely to excite any longer the least degree of surprise; we have quite contentedly mixed ourselves with the nations; we have studiously concealed our being Israelites; we have carefully copied the follies



and vices of others, whilst we have ever neglected to imitate their virtues ; and to be brief, we must be silent, we cannot gainsay, when we are told that infidelity has made fearful progress amongst us.—We are ignorant, and wish not to be informed ; we are spoken to, and will not listen ; we are admonished to beware of the wrath to come, but too much of the world is in our hearts ; too many occupations are to be attended to ; too much wealth must be amassed ; too much pleasure must be tasted ; too many passions must be gratified ; too much ambition must be nurtured ; too much greatness must be acquired ; and at last too much pride has taken its abode within our souls, and has raised such a tumult of passions, of grovelling low desires, of exalted ambitious views, of self-importance, that nothing can be heeded but what relates to ourselves, as though each individual were all in all, and all beyond him as nothing in the balance. We talk of the light of science as incompatible with revelation ; and when asked, why? we begin to hold forth about the absurdity of one part of belief, about the blind devotion to dogmas, acquiescence in things not understood ; and, strange inconsistency ! those very ones that speak so much of the incompatibility of religion with the light of science never examined the doctrines of faith for themselves ; they are ignorant of the Bible, and, more strange to say, of the very sciences which they profess to venerate so much ; and all their haranguing about the absurdity of belief is founded upon hearsay, or upon the assumption that it is unwise to suppose that laws enacted three thousand years ago should be useful still. It is marvellous how little reason there is for infidelity, how weak the grounds are upon which unbelief rests for support, and how the contrary of the foregoing assertions is true ; for all science tends to confirm the truth of the law of God, if properly examined, without the jaundiced view, without the hoodwinking of infidelity. But nothing checks us when we are determined to follow the bent of our inclinations ; every thing is then made subservient to our preconceived opinions ; and it is almost useless to endeavour to argue unbelief out of its erroneous notions. Conviction is spurned as something contaminating, and sound argument is met by abuse ; and if even the last is met by mildness and meekness, still

a deaf ear is turned whilst the volcano of passions has not exhausted its desolating fire. Is it now wonderful that the teachers of the law are silent? that their spirit becomes faint? that they almost determine to retire from the contest and to mourn in secret over the depravity of the age, over the vineyard of the Lord because it is desolate? Truly, brethren, this is a time of great evil; daily, matters are assuming a more dreary aspect; those who formerly yet adhered a little are now also falling off; parents who still adhere neglect to teach their children the way of godliness, or even permit them, nay, compel them, to neglect the holy law for which they themselves profess a mock veneration; the holy language, in which God spoke, in which the law was given, is not regarded; men speak of abolishing it, and why? because they are ignorant, and are too indolent to make themselves acquainted with it; teachers enough there would be if they were desired—but they are not desired, and the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and the knowledge of the law of God is diminishing, waning, but not perishing! For this state of things will not last; the age of superstition, of a belief in demons, in witchcraft, in phantoms of the imagination which once was so prevalent, that enlightened and liberal men doubted of the regeneration of the world, has passed away; and the present dreadful time, when every thing sacred by age, hallowed through antiquity, is approached with rude and unholy hands will also take its flight; when the lover of his God, the real benefactor of mankind, the sincere Israelite, will again raise his head, when his words will be listened to with pleasure, and his instructions received with avidity and satisfaction. If not by our own reflection, if not by our own impulse we will seek the Lord, then He will visit us with punishment, the race of the wicked will be swept from the face of the earth, and He will probe the remainder like the fanning-mill separates the wheat from the chaff; and if the remainder be but small, they will still constitute, although diminished, the people of God, the light of the nations. Often and often has Israel sinned, often and often have the wicked been plucked out and removed out of the vineyard of the Lord, the house of Israel; still has Israel never ceased to be a people, still has religion never been wanting of defenders. But why

will we tempt the anger of God? why will we wait till the fire is kindled which will consume us? We have every inducement to be a religious, a good, a holy people; superstition has no hold in our faith; sciences can be encouraged by the sincerest, the most pious Israelite; the pursuit of gain within lawful limitations is permitted, nay, encouraged by our law; pleasure too may be moderately enjoyed; what then is prohibited? the excess of every thing; and is it too much to ask of man to withhold from inquiring after the essence of the Deity, from inveighing against the ways of his Maker, when he must be convinced, that no research can reach God, that science cannot penetrate Him, and that human ken, human infirmity cannot measure the All-wise—the Infinite—the Perfect—the Just—the Omnipotent by the puny scale of the small portion of wisdom allotted to us?—Has not God a right to demand of us to observe a day of rest to be devoted to his service—and to confine ourselves in our dealing with the world, in the pursuit of lawful gain, to such limits and checks of honesty and neighbourly love as He has prescribed in his book of law?—And, lastly, has not Heaven a right to tell man: thus far pleasures are lawful, the rest are injurious and unholy? Common reason will dictate the answers to our questions, and humanity ought to bow with profound reverence to the decision thus given by the all-wise One, and to submit to his rule with meekness and patience. And let us but pursue the lives of the godly and of the sinner; and, if nothing else will satisfy us, this inquiry must, and dictate to us the lesson which is hourly preached by the whole universe: “That in the way of piety alone there is life.” The presumptuous sinner says in his heart: “There is no Providence.” He pursues the career of voluptuousness, of aggrandizement, of ambition, and hesitates at nothing; every thing to him is lawful; he defies the Deity; he throws out taunts against the Cause of causes: but suddenly his end comes; and scarcely is his blasphemy uttered, when off he is hurried, unconscious even of the moment which terminates his worthless existence, and he leaves behind him a name, loaded with horrible notoriety, and men say of him: “So perished one who forgot his God.” Or even let his fate be a milder one; let him be smitten with sickness, the com-

mon lot of humanity; let him be conscious of the approach of death; what agony, what horror fill his mind! I speak not of the ignorant, the brutelike infidels, for they are never cited as examples by their admirers, but of those who employed their talents in misleading the world, or who concealed a course of infamy under the outward cloak of conformity with religion; no sooner do they feel that their end is coming, than they dread its approach, they curse themselves, beg of men to grant them life! life! they hope when too late to make amends for past misconduct, and at length pass away with the horror of dissolution before their eyes, and filled with dread at meeting their awful Judge who will not, cannot, pass over talents shamefully wasted, a life misspent in wickedness, hypocrisy, or unbelief.— Thus perished a Korah, a Dathan, and an Abiram; thus perished a Voltaire, and many an infidel of modern and ancient times. But let us look at the reverse of the picture. There walks the righteous; his heart is true with his Maker; his mind is filled with love towards mankind; in short, he is the child of God, the brother of mankind; and when his task is ended, he can look with composure upon his reunion with God, for he is conscious he has nothing to dread in the judgment to come. And thus departed Jacob, Moses, Elisha, and many other good men of Israel, as well as of other nations, and no doubt thus will pass away many now living, and many yet to be born. We, therefore, read in the portion of the law read to-day (Numbers xxiii. 14):

תמת נפשי מות ישרים ותהי אחריתי כמהו : במד' כג' יד' :

“ May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like him.”

Bileam had been sent, for by the king of Moab, to pronounce a malediction upon Israel, vainly imagining that this would enable him to exterminate the dreaded and hated race. For reasons known to him, God at first refused to let Bileam depart upon this errand, but ultimately He told him that if he pleased he might go, but should not dare to say any thing after his arrival contrary to the word of God which might be revealed. The gentile prophet felt himself elated with this concession,

and at once resolved to go, and the very next morning he commenced his journey; upon the way a messenger of the Lord opposed his progress, for the reason given: "Because the hated journey had been too suddenly resolved upon;" but still he was allowed after a slight detention to proceed; and when arrived at the court of the king of Moab, he accompanied the latter to the hill of the national idol, Baal, where he could see a part of the Israelitish camp. Here he prepared several sacrifices and awaited in a lonely spot the revelation of God. The revelation came; but in place of a curse, he was filled by inspiration with amazement and respect for the glory and great destination of our people, when we had not yet existed quite forty years. And thus he spoke:

"From Aram did Balak lead me, Moab's king from the mountains of the East, come curse for me Jacob, and come denounce Israel. What shall I curse, whom God not curses, and what shall I denounce, whom God not denounces? For from the top of rocks I see him, and from hills I behold him; behold the people, it dwells alone and is among nations not numbered. Who counteth the dust of Jacob, and numbereth the fourth part of Israel? May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like him!"

Filled with the knowledge of the future greatness of the then wandering people, a nation then without a home, a nation then without a country, save a small strip of land along the Jordan's banks, Bileam assured his friend Balak, the king of Moab, that it is useless to curse those whom God wishes to bless; and in another place he predicted the further rise and progress of the star which shall rise from Jacob, and the rod which shall arise from Israel, and alluded thus to the kingdom of the blessed anointed of the Lord, whom Jacob foretold when his end was approaching, whom Moses saw in his prophecy, and of whom Isaiah so beautifully sung, when predicting: "And a rod shall come from Jesse's stem, and a branch shall flourish from his roots." And then placing before his eyes the whole glory of the people, as a nation and as individuals, he wished that his death might be the tranquil, the peaceful death of Jacob, whom God called Israel, and that he might partake of the happiness which was at length to befall the nation springing from him.

Let our desire be the same, friends and brethren ! but whilst desiring, let us also endeavour to deserve it ; let us teach our children the way they should go, let us love our fellow-men truly and sincerely, let us dispense good wherever we may be, and let us also observe the precepts of the law, and reverence the Sabbath, and be mindful of what Isaiah says (chap. lviii. 13-14):

“ If thou restrainest thy foot on the Sabbath, and refrainest from doing what thou desirest on my holy day, and callest the Sabbath a delight, honoured as a holy day of the Lord, and thou honourest it by abstaining from following thy usual occupations, or seeking thy own pleasures, or speaking words : then shalt thou find delight in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ascend upon the high places of the land, and will let thee enjoy the heritage of thy father Jacob—for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”

O our Father above, fill us with thy grace, let us receive thy blessing, and when the hour of our departure comes, strengthen us with thy spirit, and lead us without perturbation, without the fear of death, from this life unto thy judgment, and grant to us and all the departed of thy people Israel, the joys of everlasting life and unending happiness, which Thou hast decreed to those that love and fear Thee. Amen.

Tamuz 11th. }  
 July 18th. } 5594.

## DISCOURSE XXXIV.

## THE PERMANENCE OF THE LAW.

PROTECTOR of Israel, Thou who hast ever shielded thy people in their dispersion and captivity, bestow also upon us thy watchfulness and goodness, and defend us from the attacks which our adversaries and the enemies of thy holy law may plan against us, and fortify us in thy faith; so that we may always exist to glorify thy exalted name, and proclaim thy glory in whatsoever place whither thy providence may lead us. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

In a former address to you I attempted to exhibit some few reasons, why we should prefer the light of revelation to the best doctrines elicited through reflection by the most eminent of heathen philosophers, even conceding that these doctrines should have originated with the heathens themselves. It was then shown how far from truth were the noblest conceptions of the human mind, and how simple, yet how beautiful were the institutions which Moses delivered unto Israel, no less in practice than in precept. But still some doubter may say: "That it is one thing to admit the beauty and usefulness of these institutions; yet something very different to believe them as essential to salvation, or to concede their unwavering truth and permanency."—Now if it were, that doubts occur only to the minds of the vicious or the non-Israelites, it were perhaps useless to trouble you, my brethren, with a refutation of such doubts; but unfortunately, Israelites also do doubt, and even to the most pure in mind the intercourse with the world will occasion perplexing inquiries, which it may not be in his power so soon to solve, as may be conducive to establish his peace of mind.—We see around us men of various persuasions, and some also of no fixed moral principles; still every one claims

of being in the right way, as though the right way, which from its simplicity and truth can be but one, were manifold and diversified. We may go a step further and maintain that, strictly speaking, there are but certain fixed actions, to do which is to do right; but where shall we find two persons exactly doing the same things, even assuming that they should maintain the same opinions? But this consideration, of the uncertainty whether we act at all times right or not, needs not to disturb us too much; since our almighty Father, knowing our imperfect organization, expects not perfection from us; as the Psalmist says: "And their heart was not true with Him, and they trusted not in his covenant. But He, the merciful One, pardoned their sin, and would not destroy; and often kept back his anger, and awakened not all his wrath. And He remembered that they were flesh." (Psalm lxxviii.) Still in point of fact, there is but one right way, and this way is the one pointed out by the revelation of God. For, the man of no principle, except his own vague ideas of right and wrong, can have no guide save interest and expediency; and as these guides are different with different persons, and constantly changing their position with the same persons even, it follows, that to measure the right by this standard would be to admit a constant change in its quality and application; and that which is wrong in one would be right in another; and what was condemned to-day might meet our approbation to-morrow. Such a rule of life would, in place of tranquilizing the mind and establishing peace in society, tend to disturb both the mind of the individual, and the welfare of the world at large, to such a degree, that the contemplation of it presents nothing but horror to the lovers of their species.—Where next shall we look for the desired standard? From men in general, let us ascend to the favoured few, who are endowed with powers of intellect beyond their fellows; but are they capable of deciding so unerringly as to become our guides? do their bodies not sicken? do their thoughts never become clouded? remains their judgment always unimpaired? and has interest nothing to do in making their opinions turn to the right and left? and, lastly, are they infallible in their decisions? To all these questions, we must return an answer unfavourable to the idea of the expediency of



adopting the promulgation of any one wise man as the standard of right, for even a Solomon may be obnoxious to the want of perfection, in goodness, in wisdom, and in consistency.—Let us next go into the assemblies of the honoured and great ones of the land; but there we shall find confusion even worse confused. Interest there rules with a potent hand; popular favour is to be courted; popular applause is to be won; the million is to be propitiated; and each individual bows at the altar of fear and self-aggrandisement, and sacrifices to them often the dearest interest of his country, and tramples upon the rights and liberties of his fellow-men, to gratify his own vaunting ambition. Even if there arises occasionally a fearless man, who dares to hold up the mirror to the corruption which overspreads the state, who is bold enough to tell his compeers that they are ruining the commonwealth by the reckless course they are pursuing, where does he find listeners? where are those that follow his standard? And even let us suppose the patriot triumphant—does he not become in his turn the tyrant? Does he not practise the same revolting acts of oppression which caused the downfall of those against whom he strove so valiantly? And let us not forget the awful lesson which the history of a civilized country taught us not many years back, and whose crimes in the way of moral and political reform, or revolution I should have said, were so great as to cause one of the greatest defenders and promoters of its excesses to exclaim on the scaffold, as she yielded up her head to the axe of her executioner: “O liberty, liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!” Assemblies of the wise therefore cannot teach us what is right.—Let us next go among the religious sects, among whom the earth is divided. But there too the weakness of human nature will astound and baffle us. One will claim its doctrines to be derived from a god who walked on earth; and look into its rules and you will see them claiming human sacrifices as a pleasant offering to its gods, and its temples you will find defiled by the blood of innocents. Another sect will teach you that all but its own adherents are children of perdition, and that its doctrines must be preached unto all men by fire and the sword. Another, and a numerous people it is, and its power is widely extended

over the earth, its armies and its fleets are the terror of all nations, and its wisdom and its learning may well excite our astonishment, teaches that for the sake of saving mankind from everlasting damnation a portion of the deity became enclosed in a body of flesh, dwelt for a space of time among men, and then suffered death by the hands of those whom to save he was sent. Further, that salvation is to be obtained only through a belief, or faith, as it is termed, in these supposed facts, and that he, thus deputed, abrogated the covenant which the Lord of hosts had made with Israel, and that further by our unwillingness to accept of the new covenant, as it is called, we forfeited our right and former claim as the elect people, and more still, that those nations who have adopted the new creed have been chosen in our stead, and that the new dispensation has been substituted as a better one and to the exclusion of the first covenant of God. Here you have briefly laid before you a view of the various rules of life which have obtained currency among men, and, with the exception of the small number of Israelites, all other men, under various modifications, are members of these various creeds, that is to say, they are either heathens, Mohamedans, or Nazarenes. To sift the evidences by which each of these various systems is supported, and to prove its insufficiency as the universal rule of right is easily practicable. For as to heathenism and the law of Mohamed, they can scarcely be presumed by their very followers to be based upon historical truth, even setting out of sight their doctrines of doubtful morality, although it may freely be conceded that the followers of these systems may nevertheless and in spite of the defectiveness of their codes be good and moral men. An extended examination need not be gone into, as we live not among followers of Brahma and Mohamed, and since we are never in these countries invited to join those sects. But in reference to the third class, the Nazarenes, we can briefly answer them: you say the ancient law was abrogated; admit it for argument's sake; but the question recurs, where are the new duties laid down in the new code which are to be followed in lieu of the precepts admitted by you also as of divine origin? in what passage of your books have you any special legislation, unless it be a reference to the law and the prophets? And if the

law and the prophets are sufficient to refer to, without enacting new laws, how can it be possible then that the law has been abrogated?—Farther, to establish the truth of any system based upon, as it is alleged, and confirmed by, and confirming the books of our canon, it must first be established that the new does not contradict and overthrow the old; but I need not tell you, brethren, that the doctrine of the sacrifice of a portion of the deity to satisfy the other portion is nowhere, as far as we Jews understand the Scriptures, as much as alluded to; for God and man to be one is repugnant to our ideas of the purity, indivisibility, and holiness of God; that the claim for a new code being established upon the ruins of the old is plainly contradictory of two various prophecies, one of which says: “And in thee also (meaning Moses,) they shall believe forever.” Exodus xix. 9.; and the other enjoins: “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I have commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, statutes and judgments.” Malachi iii. 22. So then it will appear that the first prophet under the Mosaic dispensation, as well as the last of the series of those illustrious men, who taught the world wisdom and piety, testified as emphatically as words can make it, that the law and statutes proclaimed at Horeb were to be permanent, fixed, and unchangeable. And we come at length to the proposition which clearly follows from what has just been said, that the books called the Old Testament by the Nazarenes are either false or true alone, to the exclusion of any other book or system, and that admitting their truth and the necessity of obeying them to ensure salvation does in no way concede the truth of any other additional book or code, or the obligation of believing a single word or idea in addition to what they contain.—We are fully aware, that each class of men and also every individual supporting certain ideas concerning the rule of right can, by some show of reason, maintain their own side of the question, and to the superficial observer they may appear to refute triumphantly all objections; but let me assure you, that in no one instance yet have our opponents been able to gainsay our assertions, and only by imposing silence on us through the terror of persecution have they answered our arguments. Let it not be imagined, however, that it is arrogance in us to assume that we alone are

right; for even rejecting all belief in revelation, it must still be confessed, that at a very early period we alone rejected the follies of superstition, and adopted a system of moral philosophy in the highest degree sublime and beautiful, as has been shown on a former occasion, so that in place of a disbelief in a direct revelation removing our astonishment, it increases it the more. We have now arrived at the following conclusions, that a belief in a revelation is the only consistent belief, since, besides its reasonableness, all the world, with but few exceptions at most, acquiesce in it under some shape or other; and that it is equally reasonable to look for the rule of right in the Mosaic revelation alone, though we do maintain, that it is futile to look for it elsewhere. Understand the question well; it is not said that no other person but a Jew can be good, but merely that no one can be upon the right way, unless he obeys the statutes of the Mosaic code, and that moreover it is not being a believer merely of the doctrines of this law which constitutes the Israelites, but the obeying them. Having premised thus much, and shown where we can find an unvarying guide to righteousness and justice, we will dispense for the present with all arguments to prove the tenets of our religion to be good and beneficial, and merely confine ourselves to the subject we proposed for our consideration, to prove the necessity of believing in the truth of the law, its permanency, and its necessity to insure our salvation. It needs not much penetration to discover, that the God who created all, and who governs all, is able to punish and reward every man according to his merits. Farther, that if we see certain acts of God upon earth coming in consequence of certain acts of men, we must say, that because of these acts of men God acted so on his part. And lastly, if certain events have been foretold as sure to happen in consequence of certain deeds, we must acknowledge, if the prediction is verified, that because of the conditions accomplished, the predicted events came to pass, and consequently that the person who made the prediction was accurately informed of the future, that is to say, he spoke the truth; and as no man can of his own accord know what the future will bring forth, he must have been informed by the omniscient One, or in other words, that the person thus speaking was a prophet of God, and by Him

inspired to speak a message to mankind for their guidance and to warn them of the consequence of their doings. If now we apply these conditions to our law, we shall find that it can stand the test of these principles of sound reason. For as to its doctrines in the first place, we are taught to believe that only from the Creator alone proceed all events, that through his blessing countries are at peace and happy; the fields are clad with verdure; the trees loaded with fruit, and beasts and men sated with bounty. In the next place we must discover that in consequence of our people disobeying the will of God, as laid down in the Bible, they were visited with signal punishment, and as reasoning beings we must conclude that the punishment was sent by the all-wise Judge to avenge the infraction of the law. Lastly, upon inspecting the Bible, we shall find a number of predictions made at various times from Noah, the second father of mankind, to the termination of the prophecies, some of which have been fulfilled, others which are now in process of being fulfilled, and others, to judge from analogy, which will eventually be accomplished. All this proves, that those persons who pronounced these predictions were inspired by the Disposer of events, and consequently, that as children of this Disposer of all, we are bound to believe and confide in his annunciations, for to disbelieve would be in effect to deny the truth, which, even if there were no punishment consequent upon disbelief, would be to confide in our reason, or what we might be pleased to call reason, in preference to yielding our judgment to Him who is infinitely wise and infallible. To demand therefore to rest our hopes of salvation in a belief of the holy law and to obey its precepts, is only to ask of us mortals to confide and acquiesce in the judgment of the source of all wisdom, and to follow those rules, (which, coming from One who never changes, must naturally be unchangeable,) as have been laid before us as the everlasting rule of life. It will therefore strike you, brethren, that the denunciation of punishment was not a mere idle threat, and that the punishment itself was not sent merely to gratify a feeling of revenge, for revenge is a passion, and passions are incompatible with the nature of the Deity; but the punishment was announced as impending to warn mankind of the dangers they were incurring for disobe-

dience: and when they turned a deaf ear to the admonitions so kindly vouchsafed, punishment, the natural consequence of sin, soon followed to prove the truth and justice of God. It is thus therefore, that the accomplishment of the words of the law proves its truth, and its truth being proved, it remains for us to adopt its precepts and to follow the path pointed out by it as the road to everlasting life.

Permit me now to draw your attention to the terrible admonition which Moses pronounced a few days before his removal to the land of everlasting life, when he was about to resign the shepherd's staff, he had wielded so long and so faithfully over the flock of the Lord, into the trusty hands of his servant and follower, Joshua, the son of Nun. Many miracles had been wrought through him; many a time had doctrines of peace, laws of life, and statutes of salvation been promulged through him; many battles had been fought under his guidance; often also had sinners been rebuked through the spirit that spoke within him; and just before his departure he only needed yet to leave behind him a measure by comparing which with future events all succeeding ages might have an unerring means to verify the revelation given to the Israelites at the time they went out of Egypt. Blessings were promised for obedience; temporal prosperity on the one hand, and a spiritual holiness on the other; a peaceful people and a holy nation should Israel become, if they would consent to be in truth the adorers of the God of their fathers. But the wrath of Heaven was to be kindled against them, if they transgressed the covenant which had been made with them, to prove to them in their latest generation, that only through obedience to the divine will, could Israel be happy. O dreadful indeed were the words which fell upon the ears of our ancestors, when they were told that: "They should grope about at midday like the blind gropes about in the dark," aye, that their afflictions should be so great, that they should be so far removed from friendly assistance, as the blind who gropes his way in darkness with no kind hand to save him from stumbling; and how truly has this been fulfilled! Ages of suffering have passed over us, and even now our afflictions are not ended! How many thousands were slaughtered, how many innocents were plun-

dered for no evil they had done, but solely because they bore the hated name of Jew; and who heeded their sufferings? Who cared for the blood that flowed? Who minded how many stakes were kindled? It was but the Hebrew that laid in the dungeon; it was but the Israelite that groaned under the blow; it was but the Jew that shrieked as the flames slowly devoured him! And were it not that we had been dispersed, were it not that persecution could not overtake us simultaneously in all countries, the name of the seed of Jacob had long since perished. But thanks be to Him who woundeth and also healeth, and who prepareth the balsam, even before the blow is struck! He caused us, when wandering from our land, to be scattered wherever mankind dwelt, and always caused some to compassionate us, when others laid snares for our feet. So that we were preserved in diminished numbers, but still preserved, a nation one and undivided, to glorify the Name, the honoured and fearful, the everlasting Lord our God. In this also we discover the quality of goodness of the most extended manner and of that mysterious nature which the prophet alluded to when saying: "In anger thou rememberest to be merciful." (Habakkuk iii 2.) It were easy and at the same time highly instructive to compare every one of the curses with its accomplishment; but this would lead us farther than necessary, and I believe that every one of you can find no doubt a multitude of illustrations from his own reading and observation. But one of the most striking I will merely refer to before closing the subject for the present, and elucidate a little more largely its literal accomplishment.

והיית לשמה למשל ולשנינה בכל העמים אשר ינהגך  
ה' שמה : דברי' כה' לו' :

"And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word among all the nations whither the Lord will lead thee:" Dent. xxviii. 37.

If ever any prophecy was triumphantly vindicated by its accomplishment it is surely this dreadful one spoken by the father of the prophets. Understand its full import, and you will need no further illustration of the truth of Moses. The Israelites were at that time a wandering people, scarcely known

to those nations even that were leading their usual predatory and erratic life in the great deserts of Arabia, where the Israelites had been tarrying for forty years. It was but a few months previous to this time, that the first dawning of the accomplishment of the promise relative to the inheritance of the land of Canaan had taken place, and Moses himself announced that he would have to leave the actual fulfilment of the promises made through him to be brought about by another. Yet it was under such circumstances, where no human wisdom could foresee what actually has occurred, that the gifted above all men laid the coming, dark, frowning, future, before the people whom he had guided, and warned them of the dismemberment of that splendid, happy government which had been just established, and told them that the national name should become a proverb and a by-word among all the nations of the earth. And, alas! how has our people been hurled about! How has our mighty state fallen! And how has the enemy, that ne'er before durst even to approach the walls of Jerusalem, the chosen city of the Lord, and where He had promised to let his glory dwell, broken down its walls, battered its gates, devastated its houses, profaned the temple, and burnt down the sanctuary with the fire of desolation! And the remnant of Israel—how have they been scorned, derided, hated, and spurned! How insultingly have our foes borne their triumph; and although the age of active persecution may be said to have passed away from many countries, still how little fellow-feeling is manifested for the Jew! Aye, we are said to dwell in darkness, when the law of God is our light. The Almighty is invoked to change our heart; yet it is not to bring us back to his service, but to cause us to adopt systems which we loathe, against which our spirit revolts, and which we have rejected amidst persecutions innumerable, which we scorned, though contumely and death were our only other alternative! Besides, how many means are tried to wipe away the hated name of the Hebrew from amongst men! How many bribes are offered for apostacy—how many snares laid to lead us astray;—to the Jew as such the gates of preferment are closed; but let him only pretend to change, and riches, honours, pleasures, and offices are offered to him as the reward meet for his baseness! And if we come to



claim from the land where we are born, whose burdens we bear equally with the other inhabitants, whose homes and whose liberties we are willing to defend with our treasures, with our blood, and with our lives; we are told, that it is impossible to put us on a level with other men, that it would be blasphemy to think of emancipating the Jew, as they call it! But have we no claims upon mankind? Is not civilization indebted to us? Would sciences have flourished had we not been? Would the liberties of mankind have been so well secured were it not for our law, the promulgation of which broke the bonds of slavery, and rent asunder the chains of superstition under which all Europe groaned during the middle ages? But what avails it to hold up our claims to the equality of rights, which if even conceded in words, would in all likelihood be denied to us in effect, as long as the prejudice against our name does last, and whilst other sects look upon us as their inferiors, or as heretics to be pitied for their blindness even if tolerated from mere compassion. Virtue, wisdom, and learning, nay the comeliness of the outward person are considered as qualities of rare occurrence amongst Jews; and low cunning, grovelling meanness, a desire for overreaching the unwary, and base ingratitude, are looked upon as the proper characteristics of the Hebrews. And when our excellences are too marked, when our virtue is too self-evident, when our disinterestedness challenges a doubt even, it is then said: "It is a pity they are Jews!" Let no one say, that this is a picture of vulgar prejudice merely; would that it were so! It is our portion from the world, whether learned or unlearned; it is the contumely attached to us for our manifold transgressions, it is the indelible stain which God has fixed upon our race for their stiffnecked disobedience.

"Thou shalt be an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word." If a man reverts to our history and follows our onward course from a nomadic tribe to a powerful kingdom under the wise Solomon with so many bounties scattered over a fertile soil, with institutions so greatly tending to spread peace and contentment, with a Providence watching as it were peculiarly over our welfare: astonishment will he excited at our blindness in throwing away such blessings by the sheer folly of obeying our own impulses in preference to the dictates of Heaven!—If ad-

monitions are addressed to a people and they are warned by their preachers, they will be told, that their punishment will be equal to that of Israel unless they repent!—If an outcast from divine favour is to be painted, the picture of the dispersed Jewish nation recurs to the mind of the thinking; and be the sect heathen, Mahomedan, or Nazarene, nay, even the blind infidels, they value themselves especially that they are exempt from the curse of being numbered amongst us!—Thus, O great God, has thy anger reached us; thus, O merciful One, have thy arrows pierced our hearts! But just are thy ways! We were tired of serving Thee, we loathed thy covenant, we sought to imitate the ways of those who knew not thy service; and we now must serve those whose friendship we courted, and bear the shame of our iniquities!

Yes, brethren, we were warned; the outraged covenant cried aloud for vengeance; but what did we care? we vainly thought the evil would not come, perhaps we fancied the Almighty unconscious and heedless of our course; but the evil at length did come, and we were thus taught that the law given through Moses was true, unchangeable and necessary to our welfare. Even the persecutions we have had to endure since our dispersion have tended to confirm the truth of prophecy, and to keep us unmingled and unpolluted by an intercourse which the hollow friendship of the gentiles would perhaps have produced. Israel has been shaken by the storms of adversity, but not overwhelmed, as the prophet of Shiloh, the aged and blind Achijah, spoke to the wife of Jeroboam: “And the Lord will smite Israel, as the reed is shaken in the water, and drive Israel from off this good land, which He has given to their fathers” (1 Kings, xiv. 15), because they had incensed the Lord. The punishment as we have seen has not been withheld, but neither has the blessing been denied; for as the reed can be shaken by the flood and wind, but through its natural elasticity resists them both, so that it is not broken by what would have felled the mighty oak or rooted up the cedars on Lebanon: so have we also constantly risen after every persecution, and have remained unbroken despite of the thousands of ills which have assailed us; and regardless of the contempt of the world, and heedless of the calumnies of the gentiles, we

are still the most beloved, the protected people of the Lord. Can there be a stronger argument of the truth of the law, which has preserved a handful of people entire, when the mightiest empires have been swept away and have left not a wreck even behind? Let this therefore be our consolation, that we are in possession of the rule of right; a rule handed down to us from heaven; a rule under which in God's own good time all nations will be made happy, when it will be fulfilled what Isaiah foretold: "Rise and shine for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord has shone out upon thee. For, behold! darkness covers the earth, and a thick fog the nations, but over thee the Lord will shine and his glory will be seen over thee. And nations shall go by thy light, and kings by the brightness of thy shining. (lx. 2.)

O may our eyes behold thy glory, O Father of mercy, and may we all see thy return to Zion. Amen.

15th Elul. }  
19th Sept. } 5594.

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## DISCOURSE XXXV.

PRAYER, FASTING, AND CHARITY.

AGAIN sustained by thy grace, O our Father, we have been permitted to begin another year; again been suffered to commence a new period, in which we may gain thy favour by an obedience to thy law, or seek thy forgiveness by repentance and a return to the ways of piety. Behold us now, O our God, and God of our fathers, assembled in thy house, asking thy indulgence to our sinful acts, and to forgive us according to thy unending mercies. Not through our own merits pardon us, but because Thou art kind and gracious; and if our sins are

manifold, if our deviations have been too numerous, then let thy chastening hand fall lightly on us, so that, shown the right path by thy all-wise instruction we may be revived and live before Thee, to serve Thee, to adore Thee, to fear Thee, and to acknowledge Thee alone our God, our Father, and our Protector. Amen.

### BRETHREN !

Human life has been aptly compared to a journey, which every one has to travel to its close. On this journey all are met by dangers which they must overcome, and by adventures which they must encounter, and no rest can be expected till the journey is finished, as the dangers thereof are constantly renewed, and constantly varying their position, so that the utmost vigilance is requisite to remain unharmed amidst the difficulties, and to avoid getting into devious by-ways, which encircle the road of life on all sides. But suppose a traveller should lose his way, and find himself at a distance from the path he is to travel, would it not become necessary for him to endeavour to regain the highway, if he is at all desirous of reaching his original destination? and if he is unable to correct himself, would it not be well to ask of those whom he meets for directions how to proceed? And if he is unmindful of his progress, if heedlessly he takes no care whether he be right or wrong, whom but himself can he blame, if at last he finds his onward progress debarred by insurmountable obstacles? Just so it is with those who travel the path of life; for whether we are willing or unwilling to make any exertions, we are once here, and even must exist our allotted space below, till our Father calls us back to Him. And whilst here, we must be agents, must be active according to the capacities with which we have been gifted, and according as we endeavour to fulfil the will of our Maker, we are either good or bad. During our entire course, however, we are constantly allured by the world without us, either to good or to evil; some circumstances, some persons, call us to the house of God to worship and to adore; but there are not wanting opportunities nor men that call us away into vice and sin. The dangers which thus threaten us, and which, let me add, threaten us from the moment we begin to think, are two-

fold; first, those produced by circumstances which, as it were, address our senses silently, yet with a language not to be misunderstood; the others may be termed the results of evil communication, which allure the unwary by false pretences, and by colouring the wrong with all the appearance of right. The means of ascertaining what is right are given by the precepts laid down for us in the law, and if ever an opportunity presents itself for disobeying them, if this opportunity be ever so tempting, we must remain firm, because we are certified, that to disobey would be to sin against the declared will of Heaven. So the antidote to sin, in the first instance, is the knowledge of the law, for without this knowledge our very ignorance must misguide us. When evil associates assail us to go along with them the road to destruction, if they endeavour to counteract the knowledge of the right which we possess by impressing upon us its futility, and that there is no necessity to abide by precepts which are confessedly a restraint upon our natural inclinations: we should tell ourselves that the law is not futile, when we discover at every step, that obedience to it brings comfort to the doer thereof, and promotes peace and goodwill among mankind; and that, if there were no other punishment even save the diseases of the body and the infirmities of the mind, consequent upon the indulgence of the carnal desires, this alone would already be enough to account for the restraints laid upon us by the dictates of the divine law. But, alas! how great is the number of those who become sinners by opportunity! how great the number of those who listen to evil advice, and who leave the right—pursue the evil—and die before the knowledge of their own wrong has impressed itself upon their minds! It is strange indeed, that seeing so many evils consequent on sin, man could yet be seduced to prefer it to piety; but still the fact is, that sinning is the lot of mankind, and punishment their consequent doom. And because our Father in heaven knows our natures, He does not inflict punishment immediately after the sin has been committed, but withholds, to use the Bible language, “his anger,” and waits to see whether the sinner will not repent and return to the practice of the right. Now the question is: “How is a man to do, when he finds that he has been sinning? what should his conduct be to regain the

favour of God, which he has lost? how shall he ward off the punishment which so justly threatens him?" A man conscious of having been guilty of pursuing the wrong should, in the first place, cease at once, and altogether sinning in the manner he has been accustomed to do. He is not doing what is demanded of him as the first step to repentance, by deferring his reformation from day to day, or by breaking off by degrees. For instance, if he has been in the habit of eating forbidden food three times a day; of violating the Sabbath four times a month; of wronging his fellow-men once a week; it will not be enough for him to begin with reducing the amount of his sinning to once a day, twice a month, or once in two months; no, this is not repenting, this is only to trifle with the Deity, as though we were telling Him, in effect: "Wait, my Lord God, I cannot now reform all at once, my habits are too much confirmed, I will mend by degrees; I shall indeed be good as soon as my convenience will let me." Indeed? is this repentance? can we thus hope to blind the all-knowing One? Will He believe that our heart actually regrets our conduct, when we still cling to it with an affection which betokens not a sorrow for past conduct? And yet we hear persons speaking, that they now do wrong, because they cannot help themselves; that is to say, their convenience or their worldly interest are served by their misconduct; but at some future times, in a year or two, when they are rich enough, when their health has been too much injured to permit them to participate in farther excesses, O, then they will repent entirely, but in the meantime some slight reformation must suffice. But no, brethren, slight reformation is not the way of repentance; a ruined house may be sustained by a large number of props strongly wedged against the firm ground; but still the ruin is not thereby repaired; just so is it with the sinner; if he does not build up for himself a new building of righteousness in place of the defective one he has been inhabiting in his folly, it is but a ruin he inhabits, and sooner or later, the feeble supporters of the tottering fabric give way, and he, the deluded inhabitant, is crushed by the falling mass when he vainly dreamt himself secure. If therefore a man wishes to repent, he must cease his unrighteousness at the very instant; delays are dangerous; who knows, but before another day has elapsed, his

life on earth may be suddenly cut short, and he be thus called hence with all his unforgiven sins on his head! A man may have been deluded, he may have framed excuses for his wrongs, whilst he committed them; but this should not be any reason for his continuing to act contrary to law, when he discovers the error of his ways. If now he has ceased to do wrong, he should carefully endeavour to repair in some measure, and to the extent of his ability, the wrong he has been doing; he must be particular in his religious conduct, and leave no opportunity unimproved to do just the opposite of his former sinful conduct. And in this active reformation he must not regard any personal inconvenience he may have to encounter; no pecuniary loss must deter him; no fear of ridicule of his former associates must influence him; for if he does not yield his heart entirely to his God, if he esteems the fleeting benefits of riches and of pleasure more than he loves the favour of his Maker; if he fears more the sneers of the ungodly than the frowns of his omnipotent Judge: no reformation has taken place, and his sin is not removed, his recovery has at least not been complete. But after a man has even actually left off the evil of his ways and returned to the practice of the precepts of the law, he should still endeavour to satisfy his conscience by acts of penance. Our wise men have recommended, in consonance with the annunciations of the prophets, the exercise of the following virtues: prayer, fasting, and charity. Prayer we all know to mean an outpouring of the heart to our Maker. But this prayer should be sincere, the outpouring should go the whole length of the sin, and the returning sinner should, in offering up his heart, go over the whole course of his misconduct, paint to himself his wickedness in its proper deformity, and not endeavour to frame excuses to himself to ease his troubled conscience; but he should state explicitly, without extenuation, the whole of his deeds, and if his mind is troubled, if his feelings are pained by the humiliation he submits to, he may rest assured that he will ultimately be benefitted by the sincerity of his devotion; his feelings will become purified, his mind will become elevated, his beating heart will become calmed, and ever after he will bless the hour in which he revealed himself to himself, and look upon his confessed sins as warnings-

which will for ever deter him from recurring to his course of vice.

In the same manner, as prayer is the expression of feeling in words, so is fasting the expression of contrition in acts. By fasting, the sinner reminds himself, and makes an impression on his mind, of the wrong he has been doing; and if the fasting follows upon a sincere change of heart, the having once done actual penance, will always prevent him from falling into the same error, should it ever present itself again to him. It is not that God wishes us to punish ourselves, that our deprivation may be a pleasure to Him; only that our repentance may be done in such a manner as to remain unforgotten by us. Mere sorrow, even anguished feelings may, after a while, fade from the memory; but active repentance, bodily affliction, fasting with a knowledge of our sins, can hardly ever be obliterated from the mind; and besides, whilst fasting the sinner will revert constantly to the reason of the penance, and in this manner perfect the change of heart, which thought and prayer have begun.

As a third means of propitiating the favour of Heaven, we are taught to do charity, not merely to dole out alms to beggars, but to bestow our aid to the afflicted, to right the oppressed, succour the poor, and save the tottering brother from falling. If a person having sinned, especially against his fellow-man, and being conscious of his transgression, wishes to show his love of God, revived now in him through repentance: he should prove that he is now willing and anxious to follow his Maker in deeds of benevolence and charity; and in place of his having been hard of heart and unmerciful, he should, being regenerated, be the friend of the poor, the father of the orphan, the protector of the widow, and merciful to those whom the world uses despitely.—Even if a man should not be blessed with riches, and be thus unable to give away much in charity, then let him give according to his means; and if it be altogether out of his power to give, then let him do personal acts of kindness to all who may stand in need of them; and there are surely always enough that mourn, and over the face of sinful earth sorrow is at all times widely spread. Aye, let him who repents enter the abode of sorrow, let him



speaking comfort to the prisoner, let him dry the tear of the weeping orphan, let him endeavour to calm the tumultuous heaving of the widow's grief, let him stand by the couch of sickness and wipe away the damps of death from the brow of the departing; let him proclaim the goodness of God to him who is despairing: and he may rest assured that his return to good, will be the most acceptable offering which the sinner can bring to his offended Judge.—As a further step in a permanent repentance it were well, that a man should associate with those who fear the Lord, eschew the society of the evil-disposed, avoid temptation; and if his fall is at all owing to ignorance, let him go to the houses where the law of God is taught, even let him, confessing his ignorance, ask advice of those who are better informed than himself, just as a traveller, who has gone astray asks of those whom he meets, which is the road he ought to go. And even one, to whom the statutes of the Lord are familiar, should again and again revert to them, frequently read and study the life-dispensing word, and upon every act consult what God wills he should do, as a wayfarer looks up to the post which at the crossings of the road marks out the path which leads him to the haven of his designation.—Thus fortified by prayer, by penance, by charity, and by a study of the holy Word, may the repentant sinner freely look upon himself as having regained the way of righteousness, and as being again likely to become deserving of the divine mercy.—And although our transgressions may be manifold, the mercy of God is still greater; if even our sins are countless, the kindness of God is still more beyond measure. So, let no one who has sinned despair of mercy, let him not look upon himself as an outcast from divine favour; but no matter how heavily thy conscience be laden, erring brother! come and call upon thy Father and Creator, and throw thyself for protection and forgiveness before his footstool. Lay open before Him thy heart, and receive the reward meet for thy confidence; for know that we are promised, that even if our sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow through repentance.—God has promised us forgiveness if we seek it; and it is therefore adding unbelief to our other sins, if we despair of the fulfilment of the promises

of mercy. And thus speaks the prophet Hosea in his address to Israel :

שובה ישראל עדה' אלהיך כי כשלת בעונך : קחו  
 עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה' אמרו אליו כל תשא עון וקח  
 טוב ונשלמה פרים שפתינו : הושע יר' ב-ג :

“Return, O Israel, unto the Lord thy God, although degraded through thy iniquity. Take but prayers with you, and return to the Lord! Speak to Him: O Thou, who forgivest all iniquities, receive graciously our doing good, and with our lips we will repay the steers of sacrifice.” xiv. 2-3.

Here we are told the consoling truths, that repentance will be availing though the iniquities he has been committing have brought man to stumbling; and that no sacrifices are absolutely necessary but an amendment of the heart, a return to good, and an outpouring of a contrite spirit. If sacrifices were alone capable of affording atonement, there could at this moment, no atonement be made for captive Israel; for we have no temple, no priest, no sacrifices. But our Father, when He cast us out from our land, did not by punishing us, cast us off from his grace; and He is yet our God, although we no longer can lead the steer of sacrifice to his holy courts to atone for the transgressions of our people on the Day of Atonement. But when we assemble in the minor temples in all places of our habitations, and institute there a rigid inquiry into our conduct, condemn sincerely whatever wrong we find, lay our case before God, and come away amended in deeds, and resolved in mind to be obedient henceforward: we are promised, that God will heal the wounds of our apostacy, love us again in his favour, and take away his anger from us. Like the blessed dew He will be to us, we shall bloom like the rose, and take root like the forests on Lebanon. These are the promises of the Lord, and we may, therefore, freely give up ourselves to the guidance of our better feelings, which constantly draw us to the righteous way. And what hinders us? Interest, in the first place; because we might lose worldly gain, if we are religious. Next, pride; we cannot confess to the world that we have been in the wrong in our former doings. Lastly, false shame; we

cannot bear to lose the name of an independent spirit, of a deep philosophical thinker, which had been given to us for our former contempt of all religious duties. Superadd to these chief causes in some, the ruling moral supineness in others, that inactivity which rather yields to the evil passions than grapples with them, and you have the whole amount of obstacles to a thorough reformation. And are these so very formidable? Let us view worldly interest in its strongest points, admit that a violation of the law can produce a rich harvest of wealth and renown; and still a man must be very short-sighted if he cannot see that these ends never can satisfy all the cravings of the mind. And let a person's riches be ever so great, either he is compelled to leave them, or he is not permitted to enjoy them even during his whole life; and the man of power does not repose on a bed of roses; envy assails him; hatred pursues all his steps, and deadly revenge lays schemes against his life. Add to which, that no man dies with half of his desires gratified, and then answer for yourselves, whether there is aught in riches or in power so very tempting, as to sacrifice the everlasting interest of the immortal soul to their acquisition or retention.

Pride, I said, will not suffer us to confess ourselves to have been in the wrong; but though we can carry a bold front before the world all the days of our life, it is impossible to escape the notice of God; and consequently it were better at once to mortify our pride by an acknowledgment of our error, than to incur the inevitable tendency of an unreformed life of sin. Further, we should reflect, that but the first beginning will be painful; and if we have once conquered our pride, have once acknowledged our wrong, the subsequent religious conduct of our reformed life will never pain our self-love any more; on the contrary we will look back with satisfaction upon the hour when we humbled our pride, when we yielded our spirit, to the divine inspiration of repentance.

False shame also is an obstacle, as has been said; a man has had a name of an independent philosopher, and if he should yield submission to religion, he of course loses this envied distinction. But what does he lose thereby? he is praised for the possession of a positively injurious quality, a blind over-

weaning confidence in his own wisdom, and by repentance he yields his judgment to God's guidance; and thus though he humbles himself, and confesses that his own knowledge has been no just guide, he thereby acquires a safer conductor, for the profession of the holy law will enable him the better to lead a life of piety, humility, and benevolence; and he will earn in place of the admiration of the idle, the worthless and the ignorant, the satisfaction of the Searcher of hearts, the Knower of all secrets, the Judge of all flesh, of Him who punisheth iniquities and rewardeth obedience!

And as to moral supineness preventing reformation, the sinner should be reminded that, as with pride, the first effort alone is really painful, and by degrees, even the most cherished debaucheries and extravagancies will become absolutely nauseous; and when once a person has confirmed himself in the practice of morality, moderation, and religious observances, no one more than himself will be surprised at his blindness and folly in having been so long the slave of vice and infidelity.—Let us, therefore, join heart and hand, and resolve firmly to return to the Lord, and let each leave off the wrong that is in his hand, and endeavour to repair as much as possible, the evil he has committed. “Let,” as Isaiah says, “the sinner leave his way, and the man of wrong his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He is great in pardoning.” Thus has the Lord promised; and we the children of the first believers; we the descendant of Abraham, who left his father's house by command of God—of Isaac, who was willing to die a sacrifice on the altar of the Lord—of Jacob, who even among idolaters and in servitude never gave up his innocence;—we the inheritors of the everlasting covenant; surely we ought not to disbelieve, to hesitate, to despair of mercy; and although stumbling through our sins, let each recurrence of the season of repentance impress us with the necessity of repenting and returning to the way of righteousness. And O! may our eyes live to see the day, when all Israel, returning to the God of their fathers in truth and righteousness, will exclaim again as in days of old: “The Lord is the God, the Lord is the God.” Such a Day of Atonement will indeed be an acceptable day to our almighty Father, and a day of glory

and happiness to Israel, and well may he who confides in the Lord say at its close: "I am now willing to die, since over the regenerated earth again walks peace, and in the habitations of men again dwell piety and the grace of the Lord."

Father of mercy! grant our portion in life and happiness, and shield us from famine, from war, and from pestilence; and let the year which has just begun be to us and all Israel a year of joy, of peace, of light in the law, of health, of contentment; a year in which thy people may not need the assistance of each other or of a foreign people; a year in which Thou mayest restrain mortality, pestilence, and destruction from us; and upon the people, amongst whom we live grant peace, and plenty, and let their hearts be inclined to mercy towards us and all Israel our brethren. And O, Protector of Jacob! arrest the arm of persecution, stay the evil advice which our enemies give, baffle their thoughts, and render as naught their intentions, and show to all nations of the earth, that Thou art our Father and Redeemer; and let it be thy will, God of our fathers, to let thy glory again dwell among us, and send thy anointed to gather us from all portions of the earth. Amen.

Tishry 7th. }  
 October 10th. } 5595.

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## DISCOURSE XXXVI.

THE JEWISH FAITH.

To the God, who is alone everlasting and unchanging, and who keeps his promises unto the latest generations, be praise and glory and adoration from all the creatures that He has created in his mercy and kindness. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

The religion, by the bestowal of which, God has favoured us, demands of us two things ; namely, believing or faith, and deeds, or in other words active religion. Without a motive for action we do not act, and consequently without a motive for religious conduct we would certainly not be religious ; and consequently if we wish to be religious, or to speak more properly, if we are really anxious to secure that great share of happiness which flows from an obedience to the divine law, we must fortify ourselves previously by an acquisition of such feelings as best conduce to such a desirable consummation ; or what is the same, we must endeavour to grow in faith, and strengthen thereby the growth of good deeds ; for faith alone can be the producer of outward actions, if these actions are to have the least claim to sincerity. It is true, any one can practise the same line of conduct pursued by another, without being in the least imbued with the feelings of the latter ; he may accommodate himself to an outward conformity from interest, from fear, or even because he would as leave do one thing as the other ; but it must be evident to even the most charitable judge of human infirmities, or the most indulgent palliator of human faults, that the conduct of such a hypocrite, coward, or indifferent one, cannot in any degree be considered as deserving of the smallest degree of approbation ; because there is wanting that inward impress of hallowed thought which can evidently alone stamp it as possessing value and real usefulness. For, let the hypocrite be removed from observation, will his conduct not change ? Let the fearful coward be beyond the fear which spell-bound him, where will his conformity have flown to ? Let him, who amongst faithful Israelites is an Israelite in his outward practice, be placed among those acting otherwise, will his indifference not induce him to agree with his present associates ? These questions answer themselves, and unfortunately examples are not wanting to prove that they are not based upon mere supposition. It remains therefore for us to find out precisely those principles which when cherished will induce, amongst all men, a uniform course of action, as far as uniformity can be reached by so many thinking beings and who are all

placed in different circumstances, and all labouring under the disadvantage of a want of uniformity of instruction and intellectual endowments.—To premise: we all, every human being, even the suicide, constantly strive by every act, unless we are at the moment under absolute constraint, to improve our happiness, or to avoid an intolerable evil, which two motives, if properly considered, will be found to be identically the same; for a removal of any evil, let it be ever so small, is an absolute increase of happiness to an equal amount. Since now the pursuit of happiness is our ruling motive, and since every one thinks himself properly in pursuit thereof: it is evident, since we see men differing so widely in their conduct, and since the two extremes of a thing cannot be the same, that it is owing to the want of proper information or correct training, which training is in most instances, if not in all, the parent of information. And although each one thinks himself acting correctly and in a manner which will best secure happiness to himself and those dependant upon him: still it is evident that misery is the result of many a one's conduct, misery to himself and misery to others. Now it is not to be denied, that there is hardly any line of conduct, or we may at once admit for argument's sake, that there is none, which will exempt us from evil; but it is equally true, that many ways there are which will be more useful than others; and as believers in an overruling Providence we must say, that upon the way of righteousness, there is, when properly viewed, no evil whatever; as even the apparent ills are always leading to some beneficial ending. It is therefore at once incumbent on us to seek this way which will lead to so glorious a result, and not alone this, but to acquire such feelings, to the exclusion of all others, as will prevent us from ever leaving this good way, when once we have entered upon it. And let it be observed, that it is mainly for our own sakes that we should do so, for by the accruing happiness no one will be more benefitted than ourselves.

As following from what has been said we will now maintain, that a belief and an acquiescence in religious doctrines, clearly defined and well understood, will hold the mind devoted to religious conduct, and what is the same will insure happiness.—Some persons may object to creeds, as demanding an acqui-

escence in things not understood, in doctrines not consonant with reason; but such an opinion is entirely erroneous, and shows an ignorance with those doctrines which are attempted to be undervalued.—We will proceed now to the consideration of the doctrines of faith, which are the foundation of the religion which we profess. In the first place, we have as the foundation of all religion, the belief in the existence of a God; secondly, we are to acknowledge that this God made known to mankind his will for their guidance; and thirdly, that we are accountable to this God for a dereliction from, or to be rewarded by Him for an obedience to, his will as to us declared. I have said that the foundation of our religion is entirely consonant with reason, and that besides its doctrines can be clearly defined and readily understood; it will therefore be now necessary to elucidate this assertion entirely to your satisfaction, although this may by some be considered as hardly necessary, where the proof is so obvious.—The first fundamental principle says: “There is a God.” Yes, there is a God! all nature cries; there is a God! who made all that our eyes behold and that our thoughts can conceive; there is a God! the angels exclaim, who is far removed beyond the ken of the purest, and greatest, and wisest of all existing beings; there is a God! the saints respond, who is blessed beyond all conception, who is good beyond the reach of the imagination. If we but cast our eye upward to the starry firmament, and behold the myriads of suns sending down their beaming light upon us; when we see the quiet moon winging its circuit round our planet, when we regard the bright light of the glorious sun, which refreshes and quickens all here below: we must acknowledge that one, great, and mighty Architect made them all, and appointed to each and all the courses they are to pursue, till their task is ended, till their end has come; when they, the great monuments of God’s wisdom, too, may pass away; and thus show, that He alone endures for ever.—Go abroad from your dwellings, and gaze on the fields clad in the spring-time with the mantle of green; see the trees putting on their leafy garment; and see in summer the golden fruit ripen in the wide-spread plain; and in autumn the clustering grapes suspended from the vine; and in winter the dazzling snow shroud-



ing the face of the land to render again fruitful the exhausted soil : and then say, whether or not there is one wise Creator that organized all so beautifully and for so benign a purpose. And look upon the streamlets, how they bubble forth from the flinty rock or the marshy fen, how they swell and unite into a mighty stream, till the heaving ocean receives the lengthened and majestic river ; and that highway of nations itself, the salty and unfathomable deep which surrounds the earth—and gain-say, if you can, that our Father above breaks the rock with his potent might and bids the waters flow, and gathers the streams, bears onward the waves, and piles as it were in the hollow of his hand the restless, swelling ocean's flood, and sets to it a limit, saying : “ Thus far only shalt thou come ! ”—And who is it, O mortal proud, who causes the invisible wind to blow ; who is it that bringeth up clouds from the ends of the earth ; at whose bidding does the thunder roll, and at whose command does the lightning flash ; at whose nod does the earth-globe tremble ? unless it be our almighty God ?—and say, who provideth food for thee ; who is so bountiful to all that has life ; who so kindly sustains all, if it is not He who formed all that exists ?—And reflect upon thyself, and contemplate the wonderful construction of the animal frame, gifted with strength and beauty ; and thy sentient soul, she, that feels, and thinks, and plans, and resolves ; and longs for happiness ; and then answer, if not an all-wise Power has organized thee and all else around thee !—And thus it is, whether we engage in the study of the heavenly spheres ; the earth on which we live ; the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea ; or if we, leaving all outward nature, revert to ourselves : we will ever arrive at the point to which all contemplation must at length lead—the existence of a Creator, the Cause of causes, the Power of powers !—And where is that gloomy fanatic, that lost son of humanity, who, because he cannot conceive *what is God*, doubts his existence ? How miserable must he be, to find himself in this world surrounded by dangers, encircled by misfortunes, which he himself cannot remove, and which he believes there is no being capable of removing. And let him pursue his own reflections, does he at length not come to a proposition which is in effect an acknowledgment of

a Creator, though he does wish to confess it in so many words? Ask him, what he considers the origin of things to be; and he must say, to solve the mystery of existence, that there existed matter, and that through an arrangement which he cannot explain (mind brethren, the atheist is not in the least nearer to knowledge because of his reckless denial) things were so ordered, fortuitously of course, as we find them; but is it not evident to every one, except to the wilfully blind, that this fortuitous Arranger, but which in effect must be an intelligent mind, is actually a God, a Creator, and, what follows of itself, a Preserver? The truth is, there is nothing more absurd than the denial of a Creator, for there is no conceivable theory of explaining the existence of any organization without Him. And as said, though we confess, that we know not what God is, how He exists, when his existence began: still we have a starting-point upon which to rest our system; we adore Him, who is inconceivable, we submit to him, who is removed from our research, and in our affliction we call upon Him, who, having made all according to his will, can order things, can arrange his creation as may be pleasing to Him, at all times, at all seasons, and under all circumstances. And he who denies this, is he any wiser than we? Are his ideas of his own origin any more satisfactory? Is his system, to use the cant phrase, a phrase much abused by the ignorant or would-be-wise, is his system, I meant to say more philosophical, or does it not lead, as briefly exhibited already, to the most monstrous absurdities and contradiction?—No brethren, atheism is unreasonable; and there is no reason whatever for a thinking man to adopt the horrible system of absurdities which it must produce. I will not now enter upon the practical evils of social disorganization which must follow in its train; since my present object is merely to show its folly and unsoundness, and to exhibit briefly the beauty and consistency of the first tenet of our holy law, which demands: “There is a God.”

This God, who is so infinite, so immeasurably great, has thought fit at different times to reveal himself to certain persons of both sexes, and of various nations, to make known through them the doctrines and laws, by which He wished mankind should be governed, without however depriving any one of the

free will to adopt or reject these precepts; or to express myself more distinctly, laws were given by obeying which we should be acting according to the will of our Maker, and by doing so deserve his favour, but whilst the way was pointed out to us, no actual compulsion was laid upon our inclinations; for though instructed, we can, if our wayward fancy should incline us, act in such a manner as though no law had been given, and conduct ourselves contrary to, and in defiance of, the will of God.—It is not necessary at this moment to prove the reasonableness of this principle, since I have so often before to-day called your attention to the subject, and I trust the little I have advanced has been more than enough to remove doubts, at least so far as to answer objections. To me indeed it appears superfluous to argue the subject; for God's ability to communicate his will, if He is so disposed, cannot be doubted; and He who provides for the wants of the animalcules, a million of which will barely cover the end of this finger, could, and must have given to man, the crown of his creation, a guide to his mind, a prop to his soul which should be a shield against evil and a guardian that should point out, and lead on to everlasting happiness.—A few words at this time only will I add with reference to the record of the divine revelation which we now possess, and which as you well know, it is our duty to obey. In the first place a great injury is done to religion by the ignorant looking upon it as the work of Moses. But how often must it be repeated, that Moses was not the author of a single enactment, but that he acted merely as the messenger whom the Israelites themselves had selected to communicate to them whatever God might reveal to him for their guidance? If it were indeed that the Mosaic law had no better foundation than human ingenuity, then for a certainty it would be unreasonable to demand implicit obedience to its tenets, any more than to the works of Solon, of Confucius, of Matthew, or of Paul. But if we look upon it according to its real merits, if we behold in it the workings and the immediate inspiration of the Deity: then indeed the case is entirely altered, and the enactments it contains in this case demand, not alone our attention, but an entire and confiding obedience. And do not the various statutes, independently of

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every other consideration, deserve, from their extreme utility, all that the advocates of their sanctity ask for them? What law does so well secure the liberty of the citizen, the administration of justice, the righting of the oppressed, or watches with so much solicitude over the security of the helpless female, the bereaved orphan, the unprotected stranger—even the slave, who, to escape from his tyrant's oppression, comes to seek the protection and security of the divine code? Come, and let us take a few of the laws; for instance: "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;" doubtlessly, he who luxuriously, in the arms of riches, in the possession of plenty, idles away his whole life, may not feel the force, the benignity, the extreme wisdom, let me add, of the commandment; but go amongst the multitude, who, true to the curse pronounced against the sinning progenitor of our race, "earn their bread by the sweat of their brow," go and see how gladly they celebrate the weekly Sabbath; how joyfully they welcome the heavenly bride; go and see them at their holyday repast, with how much religious zest the viands of the body even are enjoyed, because it is the Lord's holy and blessed day: and then say, if you can, whether such a spread of hilarity among so many intelligent creatures, who, though poor, are as much entitled to repose and enjoyment as the irresponsible autocrat of a mighty kingdom, is not a work for the ordination of which the loving Father of his creatures might not employ himself, consonantly with his dignity and wisdom? In short, all who labour, be they farmers, mechanics, teachers, servants, judges, or scholars, all must equally be rejoiced when weekly their toils are suspended, when they are left to acquire new strength for renewed exertion.—"Honour thy father and mother" is another precept; this too may not be palatable to the idle and vicious offspring, who, when their father grows old, when their mother becomes helpless, may think that the aged ones have lived long enough, and may even think it a mercy to terminate by one blow the sufferings of decrepid old age. But were the parents to think so, and cast off the puling, helpless, almost unconscious, tender nurseling, where would these same vain, arrogant ones be? what but a mother's care watched over the infant, called forth its nascent intelligence by maternal endearment, hung with hope and fear over the

couch of early suffering? who but a father would toil from early dawn till the hour of eve, under the rays of the scorching sun, amidst the war of elements, in the piercing blast of a winter's storm, to provide bread for the infants whom it is his joy to call his own offspring, the children of his beloved wife? And these are the beings whom unbelief would forsake, when they in turn become helpless, when they are helpless perhaps through fatigue endured, through expenses incurred for those ingrates who now anxiously hope for their dissolution!—Again says the law: “Thou shalt not commit adultery;” “there shall be no incest among you.” And how eloquently do these precepts appeal to the feelings. Among heathen nations, and even among the enlightened people of the present day, the female was or is yet looked upon as an instrument of pleasure; and when once contaminated by the touch of vice, she is cast abroad as something too unclean for the touch, as one abandoned to merited opprobrium, nay, as one placed beyond the pale of compassion. And it is to protect the thoughtless and perhaps too confiding woman that these statutes were enacted; to banish from the heart of society that portion which, as an eloquent female writer observes, is at once the victim and parent of vice; and therefore we have so many details in the Pentateuch which are to regulate the judges of Israel in their decision in all cases of incest and immorality. This is the law in which we are to have faith, and against which the voice of unbelief ought not to be raised; and especially it is horrible to hear females uttering aught of disrespect against the holy tenets; and to me it appears, that although in man infidelity is unpardonable, it appears doubly offensive and unnatural in woman, whose very estimation, and rank, and welfare in society are chiefly based upon the benign code which we profess. Were I to follow my own inclination, were I as eloquent as the subject deserves, I would for hours descant upon the theme, and not leave it till all had acknowledged themselves convinced; but my tongue is feeble, my mind insufficient to reach the end; and you, sons and daughters of Israel who hear me, surely need not for my admonition to exhort you to uphold that which your own hearts, your own convictions, must tell you, is beyond price invaluable.

We now come at length to the last fundamental principle of our religion, which teaches: "God will reward the righteous according to his righteousness, and give to the wicked according to his wickedness." A very few words will suffice in explanation. God, the Creator of all, has made his will known to mankind for their government; but as said already He gave them a free will to obey or not to obey. At the same time He declared, that by obedience life would be obtained, but the consequence of disobedience should be death. Now, as the conditions are known, and as God is all-powerful, it follows that obedience or righteousness will meet with reward or life; disobedience or wickedness with punishment or death. And as the Creator's power is not limited by time or space, reward or punishment will be the certain consequence of our conduct, either in this life, or after death when we shall have entered a new state of existence. And thus says David: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither from thy face shall I fly? If I ascend to heaven Thou art there, and if I should lie down in the abyss, I should find Thee."—These now are the feelings which we should cultivate to be sincerely religious; we must believe in the existence of God, in the promulgation of his law, and in the certainty of reward and punishment. A faith like this, in principles perfectly reasonable and clearly understood, must step by step promote a holiness of heart, a readiness to acquiesce in and to exercise the duties of religion. A faith like this may be properly termed, a justifying faith, because it preserves the mind pure and undefiled from the access of sin and corruption; and if even sin should have already been committed, it will tend to clear away the impurities, the dross of wickedness, and produce a cleansing of the spirit and a regeneration of the inward man, and render him a just and worthy servant of the Lord.—As a consequence of being in possession of faith, a man will be imbued with resignation to God's decrees and a sincere belief, that all that happens is from a good and wise purpose; further, it will cause a filial reliance upon God's promises, and prevent the righteous from ever despairing, although he see not the fruits he might hope for from his well-directed conscientious exertions.—Such a faith it was which animated our glorious ancestor Abraham. He stood forth

amidst the heathens, a shining light amidst the darkness, and proclaimed the unity and eternity of the Creator of all. Abraham had been promised that in him all families of the earth should be blessed, and that he should be the progenitor of a numerous nation. Time had passed on, and the Patriarch had reached perhaps his eighty-fifth year, and still he was childless. But now he was assured, that despite of unfavourable appearances the promise of a numerous progeny should eventually be fulfilled. And says the text: "And He led him out abroad, and said, Look up I pray thee, and count the stars if thou canst count them; and He said to him, Thus shall be thy descendants." And continues the sacred writer:

והאמין בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה : ברא' טו' ו' :

"And he believed in the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Gen. xv. 6.

Abraham thus, as we see, believed firmly, confidently in God and his promises, undismayed by the improbability of the fulfilment, and we have it here recorded that this faith was reckoned as an exertion of righteousness; and this shows us, that thoughts as well as actions are meritorious in the sight of the Searcher of hearts.—And the promise so solemnly given and so truly believed has been fulfilled, and we are here this day the witnesses of the truth of prophecy and of the unwavering righteousness of God; for we are the children of Abraham, the fulfilment of a long cherished promise. And should we waver? should we hesitate? should we doubt? No, let it be our constant endeavour to fortify ourselves in faith, and to increase in righteousness, and let it never be laid to our charge that we have basely dishonoured the name of Abraham, the friend and adorer of God!

May we all live in righteousness and holiness, and may the workings of faith, proved by deeds of devotion to God's holy law, cause our prayers to be acceptable before the throne of Him, who lives for ever and whose glory filleth all the universe! Amen.

Heshvan 12th. }  
Nov. 14th. } 5595.

## DISCOURSE XXXVII.

## THE PUNISHMENT OF PHARAOH.

O MYSTERIOUS and omnipotent Being, who art so far exalted and removed beyond our mortal research, fill our hearts with meekness and devotion, that we may implicitly resign ourselves to thy guidance, and submit with patience to thy all-wise dispensations. And O our Father ! if Thou sendest sufferings to our hearts, if Thou leadest us through the valley of the shadow of death, because of our transgressions : O do Thou lead us, do Thou support us with the right hand of thy salvation, and guide us safe and unscathed, and cause our faith in thy goodness to remain undiminished ; and let us be instructed by thyself, that the pains which thou dispensest are sent to cement the stronger the ties, by which Thou drawest thy children closer unto thyself ; and that it is by tribulations only that our sins are washed away, and we are rendered again pure and unspotted, and worthy of thy unending grace and favour. Amen.

## BRETHREN !

Often indeed it happens that we humble, uninstructed, and short-sighted mortals presume to call in question the decrees of the Deity, and as it were the creature arraigns, and sits in judgment over, the all-wise and blessed Creator. Vain presumption ! sinful audacity ! how can we, the worms of the earth, whose being is limited to the shortest span, whose mind is incarcerated within a mortal habiliment, whose ideas are weakened, whose perception is blunted by sorrow, by sickness, by pains, by passions—how can we—how dare we—mistrust the wisdom, the goodness, the infallibility of Him, who is “ old of days,” whose mind is unsearchable, to whom every thing is known, to whom all existing things are as naught, who is never disturbed, never influenced, by sorrow or by suffering, by passion or by ignorance ? who when He judges, judges with



mercy? who when He punishes, sendeth the balsam before the wound is struck?—And what are to Him the earth and all that fills it, the sea and the mighty monsters of the deep, the birds that seek the expanse of firmament,—when all that is in being is derived from Him alone,—when all that breatheth is to Him accountable?—And still, despite of the immeasurable difference which divides us from Him, our God, we are yet weak enough, vain enough, presumptuous enough to judge Him by the weak, imperfect standard of our intellect! And in reading the records of revelation we are very often led away by our ignorance to impugn the justice of God in his actions towards men, as though He could view things with human feelings! It must strike you as self-evident from the very nature of things, that such a mode of reasoning, which would apply to God's actions the standard of humanity, must be erroneous, and lead to pernicious conclusions, in as far as it would weaken our attachment to the doctrines of the Bible, and render us lukewarm in the execution of its precepts. It is, therefore, necessary, that our studies and our researches, as well as our conduct, should be characterised by a deep humility and by a sincere single-heartedness, which should induce us to approach the word of God with fearfulness and with a weak reliance upon our own wisdom, and with a perfect consciousness, that the divine Author of our legislation could not err in his decrees any more, than in the line of conduct He chose to pursue to our ancestors and to the nations whose history is interwoven with our own. If we approach the investigation of the Scriptures in this spirit, we shall hesitate in our judgment upon points which at first sight might appear unreasonable; and we will, as a necessary consequence of our perfect reliance upon the truth of what is written down in the holy Text, shape our conduct in strict conformity to its behests, as by so doing we follow the persuasions of unwavering, uncorrupted, and unchanging truth. But should we on the other hand approach to the investigation of the Bible-text with a determination to use our own wisdom as a sure and safe guide, and set to work to accommodate the events of history to our views of right and wrong, add to which, that our understanding of the text may at the same time be in some degree defective and our acquaintance with history and the operations of the human heart

deficient: it is absolutely necessary, that we will end by cavilling at the justice of God, and as a natural consequence, our veneration for the words and precepts of Scripture will become weakened; and this again will lead to unbelief, and unbelief to irreligion and immorality, and these again to the loss of happiness which is so abundantly to be found in the practice of the commands of the holy law.—Humility, however, in an investigation so important, not alone to ourselves, as individuals, but to all in any degree connected with us, will teach us, even if the subject matter is capable of no explanation whatever, that we must submit, where there is no means of arriving at knowledge, and that the Almighty is as incapable of injustice, as his wisdom is incapable of error. Besides, it must be considered, that if to-day, with the information in our power, any thing or event is inexplicable to us, the case may be altogether different to-morrow, if our sphere of knowledge be then more extended. So far, therefore, is an acquiescence in religious truths an evidence of credulity and ignorance, that it may be viewed as proof of a purer than worldly wisdom; since it may be based upon a knowledge of our capacity of arriving daily and hourly at more information, and the assurance that after a long life spent in the pursuit of knowledge, there is an immense field yet unexplored. And thus it happened with one of the most remarkable men in a preceding age, whose discoveries in philosophy have opened a new career to subsequent discoverers, and whose virtue was equal to his learning. At the close of a long life, when he might be supposed to have done as much as lay in human power, he is said to have spoken of his own attainments: “I am but like one who has been picking up shells on the borders of the great ocean of truth.” This good man, whose candid confession thus feelingly spoken may well tend to strike with shame the presumptuous scoffer and the vain glorious egotist, was not one of our brethren; yet we must respect virtue wherever we find it, and wherever we see the stamp of the similitude to our heavenly Father impressed on a man, there too should our esteem and our love be directed.

But I am leaving the subject I intended presenting to your reflection to-day; and not to exhaust your patience, I find it necessary to curb the indignant feelings which ever rise within

me when I hear, or fancy I hear, the wisdom, the righteousness, or the goodness of God called into question, be this proceeding from ignorance, from unbelief, or from wickedness; since I conceive either motive extremely prejudicial to, if not altogether subversive of, true piety.—Of all objections raised against the authenticity of the Mosaic records, none have afforded more fruitful themes of declamation to infidels or those who blindly follow their silly outpourings, than the conduct of the Deity with regard to the tyrannical king of Egypt, who oppressed so cruelly our ancestors for many years, keeping them under the most horrid slavery, and dooming the name of Jacob to extermination by slaying every male child as soon as it entered the world. Let us, therefore, calmly investigate the text, and see whether it contains aught dissonant with the rule of everlasting justice. We read in Exodus x. 1–2 :

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל פַּרְעֹה כִּי אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת  
 לְבֹו וְאֵת לֵב עַבְדָּיו לְמַעַן שְׂתִי אֶתְתִּי אֱלֹהִים בְּקִרְבּוֹ : וְלִמְעַן  
 תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנִי בְּנֵךְ וּבֵן בְּנֵךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלִיתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם  
 וְאֵת אֲתִיתִי אֲשֶׁר שְׂמַתִּי בָם וַיִּדְעֶתֶם כִּי אֲנִי ה' : שְׂמֹתַי אֲ-ב' :

“ And the Lord said unto Moses : Go unto Pharaoh; for I have caused to be heavy his heart and the heart of his servants, for the sake that I might do these my signs in the midst of them. And for the sake that thou mightest tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son’s son that which I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done in them; and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

As I have just said, against this passage it is alleged, that it is unbecoming in God to harden Pharaoh’s heart, and then punish him for disobedience. This I believe is the substance of the charge as far as I have ever understood it, and stating it in this form I have given it, I may safely aver, its strongest bearing. I will not in refuting it overwhelm you with an appeal to the inscrutable wisdom of God, to his unwavering justice, although this would at once convince us that radically there can be nothing wrong in the passage; for we may freely say, that God knew better than we can know, how far he was justifiable to proceed towards Pharaoh without our even daring

to presume to impugn his justice. This indeed would be enough to the humble believer, who always places the Lord before his eyes, and whose heart is entire with his God. But there are many whose faith is not well founded, who are vain-glorious, wise in their own eyes, who call perhaps, in their ignorance, the light darkness, and the darkness light ; and who still, whilst always cavilling and fault finding, consider themselves as Israelites in deeds and in mind ; and for the sake of such, if any there be among my hearers, and for the sake of those who have no confidence in revelation, we will endeavour briefly to give convincing answers to their doubts and objections.—It is a fact well authenticated, perhaps by the experience of every human being, that the habit of doing any thing lessens its importance in the eyes of him who does it. Be this habit one of virtue or of vice, it matters not ; for by habit vice becomes as necessary to man as the exercise of virtue. Ask the drunkard, why he does not leave off resorting to the intoxicating draught ; the gambler, why he does not shun the gaming table ; the debauchee, why he forsakes not the haunts of the ungodly ; the man of quarrel and of violence, why he constitutes himself the bane and curse of his friends : and they will, one and all, tell you that habit has made sin so necessary to them, that it is in vain they strive against it. This, it is true, is not the case, because any habit can be corrected ; still it elucidates the difficulty under which sin places her votary, and it proves the greatness of the tyranny which the spirit of ungodliness exercises over his devoted slaves. If now, as in course He must, the Almighty visits the sinner with retribution, one warning will seldom effect any good ; the heart loves its perverseness, and it may not, nay it will not, distinguish the hand-writing on the wall as it were, which terrified amidst his unholy revels the wicked Babylonian monarch. It is not, believe me, Belshazzar alone that revels till the clutch of death is on his throat ; would to God it were so ! but alas, millions there are who sport in sin, weening the evil day will never come, and they fancy themselves placed beyond the reach of retribution. Their power is great, their riches are extensive, their fair fame stands unimpeached in the eyes of the world, they are beloved by their kindred, their health is robust, and their age is yet of the

spring of life, what have they to fear? let others tremble who are less favoured; let those worship who are needy; let those practise abstinence who cannot help themselves; let those court popularity by benevolence and good deeds who are not popular already: what indeed have they, the great and favoured, to look for or to fear? Let now as said a small warning be sent to them; let them, for instance, be thrown on the couch of sickness; do you believe that they will repent of their errors? or rather will they not regard disease as inherent to man, as a thing not worth noticing? Or let the Almighty send his angel of death in the midst of their dwelling, let him strike down the stem from which they have sprung; let him pluck away the tender shoot which is to transmit their name to after-ages; let him take away the partners of their earthly journey, whom God has assigned them as their associates on life's weary pilgrimage: will they repent? no; death, they will say, is humanity's lot, and the warning of God is forgotten.—Let us apply these facts to the case of Pharaoh. The Egyptians in a former age had received with becoming hospitality the father and brothers of their great benefactor Joseph, who had saved the country from a desolating famine through his Heaven-inspired wisdom. Another generation succeeding had overlooked what Joseph had done; and as the Israelites had in the meantime grown numerous and powerful, so that the land had become full of them, they inspired with unfounded fear the nation among whom they dwelt. The Israelites had a worship differing from the Egyptians, and the worshippers of *Adonai Shadai*, the Lord Almighty, found no sympathy with the followers of the personified sun and moon, the idols Osiris and Isis. Fear begat jealousy, and by degrees slavery was decreed the doom of the hated race, and the Israelites were compelled to “build treasury-towns for Pharaoh, even Peetom and Rangmesses. And they embittered their lives with hard labour, in clay and in bricks and in all manner of work in the field, and in their work, in which they made them work slavishly.” And as if to add insult to injury, the people who were oppressed were soon viewed as inferiors, and Jacob's blood was looked upon as contaminating to the children of Ham. Yet the increase of the enslaved people was not checked, and “the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied, the more

they spread out." And now murder was to be added; first Hebrew women were ordered to be the executioners of a tyrant's will; but the noble courage of female heroism disdained to purchase kingly favour at the expense of the wrath of God. And when he found himself foiled, and his mandates laughed to scorn, he commanded truer executioners to do his work, and every Egyptian was empowered to throw every Hebrew boy, as soon as born, into the Nile. Does not such conduct deserve punishment? Should the people go unrewarded with condign visitation who so faithfully seconded an ungodly and murderous mandate?—And when even our Moses was saved only through an overruling Providence, when the child of the chief of his tribe was not safe within the mother's fond embrace; where, I ask you, could there be safety? And even after the death of this oppressor, the burden of the Israelites was not much if any diminished; and when at length Moses had reached his eightieth year, the merciful One determined that now the cup of misery of his people was full; and that the moment had arrived when they should be led forth from bondage; and that the probation by which they should be educated in the fear and the knowledge of the Lord had been completely endured. Moses was therefore despatched to Egypt's king in the name of the eternal Lord, the God of Israel, to demand the release of the captives. The idolater knew not the Deity in whose name the prophet spoke, his priests, his conjurers, his deceivers had not taught him to fear the unseen, the incomprehensible, the not-to-be-figured God; and is it likely that he should obey a mandate of so monstrous a nature without some striking, some convincing, proof? A proof of Moses's truth he demanded. Aaron, by his brother's command, threw down his staff, and it became a serpent; but then the magicians pretended to do the like by their mysterious arts, "and Pharaoh's heart was hard (or strong)," to use the Bible-phrase, "and he did not hear to them, as the Lord had spoken," when He said: "And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, and not even with a strong hand; and I will stretch out my hand, and I will smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof, and after that he will dismiss you." Here then we have the plan of God at once displayed. Moses

was to be sent with the demand for the liberation of the captives ; but God, knowing the heart of man, told Moses for his guidance, and to inspire him with confidence, that upon his first demand, upon the first punishments even, nothing but contumely was to be looked for ; and thus speaks the verse : “ And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, and not even with a strong hand.” This assurance was truly necessary to be given, for even the messenger himself, true to human weakness, despaired of success, when his first attempt to benefit his brethren brought down upon them increased oppression and hardship.—And when Moses spoke of retribution he said : “ That the first-born should be slain as a consequence of non-compliance by Pharaoh.” Whilst therefore the death of these had not taken place, the prophet would have been looked upon as a deceiver ; it was therefore so ordained, if we take the words “ hardening of heart ” as they are commonly understood, that Pharaoh should not finally relent till the prediction had been fulfilled.—Another motive for this conduct of God is given in the text I have taken : “ That I might do these my wonders in the midst of them ; and for the sake that thou (the Israelites) mightest tell what I have done in Egypt—and you shall know that I am the Lord,”—that is to say, that He the Lord is all-powerful and irresistible, and that his will is to be obeyed, no matter if a man were ten times to oppose himself to the warnings given him, if ten times he were to resist the evidence of punishment, that his conduct is hateful in the sight of Heaven. And can any one say, that Pharaoh and his people did not deserve the punishments, the more so, as they did last but a short time ? But despite of the brevity of their duration, they were eminently calculated to strike terror from the severity of their effects, and to fill the heart with admiration of God’s power from the suddenness and awfulness and wonderfulness with which they were sent. There is every reason to believe that the Israelites also had, in the lapse of time, become greatly like their masters, addicted to idolatry, and that the pure worship, which Abraham had proclaimed, had by degrees faded also from their memory. What better method could God now employ to re-instruct them of his greatness and power, than by punishing signally, and in different manners, those that ruled over them

with oppressive sway? What could better confirm in their minds that it was the Creator of all who had come to redeem them, when they with their own eyes beheld the order of nature subverted? and must not in this way ignorance itself have been taught to acknowledge that no one, but He who made all, could work those miracles which Moses was the agent to perform? That the lesson was effectually and indelibly inculcated, no one can deny; for even to this day we tell to our children of the signs which the Lord has done in Egypt; and we ourselves know, and other nations will be brought to know, that He is the Lord, whose being is without end, and whose power is without limit. And all this was effected by punishing those meriting punishment, and by delaying a few days only the redemption which no earthly power was able to retard beyond a brief space; for Pharaoh himself at last said: "Go you out from the midst of my people."

The foregoing explanation is founded upon the assumption that the words "I will harden Pharaoh's heart" mean to express an active interference of the Deity to prevent him from doing what was asked of him. And we have seen that even then there is no cause whatever for any reasoning man to complain of the justice of God. In acquiescing in the usual version of the words *וַאֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה אֶת לֵב פַּרְעֹה* and *וַאֲנִי אֶחֱזַק אֶת לִבּוֹ* I did so merely, because I do not wish to be looked upon as though I were anxious to strike out a path of my own in commenting on the Bible. Nevertheless it appears to me that the phrases I have quoted: "I will strengthen his heart," and "I will make hard the heart of Pharaoh," mean nothing more than that the Almighty would allow Pharaoh to act according to his natural inclination, consonantly with his ignorance of the eternal Lord's power, and in conformity with his long course of sinning and tyranny. And let it be observed, that it would have sounded incredible, were the Mosaic record to have told that the king of Egypt had dismissed half a million and more of able-bodied workmen, who built his cities, his palaces, and his canals, by the command of an outcast and a refugee from justice, like Moses confessedly was, or after an unusual occurrence or two, even if there had been a flow of blood in the river, or a swarm of frogs, of noxious insects, of wild beasts, and of locusts.



Nay, we may add the plagues of a pestilence among cattle, and blains upon the bodies of men. We will not refer to the other plagues, because they were decidedly too terrific to be lost sight of, or to be regarded as of trifling import: still, when the hail had ceased, and the three days' gloom had been dispelled, it may again be said that they were not of that stamp to make a proud despot waver, who was considered among his people but little less than a god. We may therefore assume, that the words: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart," are only intended to convey, that God would not use any direct influence to bring about a change of heart or purpose in the king, which we must assume would have been in his power, as the Proverbs say: "The heart of kings is like water in the hand of the Lord, to whither-soever He willeth He turneth it;" so also the prophets: "Assyria is the rod of my wrath;" "Cyrus my servant." And God merely announced to Moses, that nothing but intense conviction, brought about by the force of circumstances, should induce Pharaoh to relent, just as is the case with an ordinary sinner, who perseveres in his misconduct till destruction threatens him openly. Thus also answered Moses, when Pharaoh, during the plague of hail, whilst thunder and lightning and icy stones terrified by their unusual violence a land in which storms are unknown, said: "The Lord is the righteous One, and I and my people the sinners;" "And thou and thy people, I know, that not yet you are afraid of the Lord God;" and immediately thereupon we read: "And when Pharaoh saw that had ceased the rain and the hail and the thunder, he repeated to sin, and made heavy his heart, himself and his servants." Let it at the same time be observed, that in no one place is it said at the announcement of a plague that the Lord would prevent Pharaoh from complying, if he were so minded. It follows, in consequence, that Pharaoh could have averted the punishment, like at a later period the people of Nineveh did, who, by command of their king, returned in sincere repentance, thinking: "Who that knows himself guilty, let him return; then the Almighty will change his intention, and leave off from his burning anger, and we may not perish." Indeed no other reason can be assigned for the repeated missions of Moses, again and again, to the oppressor; but he would not relent; he would not let Israel go and

sacrifice to the Lord: till, and only when, the storm burst over his own heart, and when his own son, his first born, who was to have sat on his throne, perished before his father's eyes, when every house was one of mourning, when in every home there was a corpse, when the land was filled with unheard-of lamentation. Then was no longer any resisting the evident power so strongly displayed, and through the midst of his intense sufferings the order for the dismissal of the Israelites was given, and they were fairly driven out of the land. If this view of the subject be the correct one, which I conscientiously believe it to be, it leaves no other difficulty to encounter, than the prediction cited: "And I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go." For some one might say: "How could Pharaoh relent, if God knew beforehand how he would act?" But this same question would be a conclusive argument against our possessing a free will in any thing, for our not doing what God knows beforehand would be counteracting his omniscience. But here, brethren, our inquiry must stop; we are free agents, and so was Pharaoh, as well as all other sinners; and how far to reconcile this fact with the knowledge of God, is not for us to inquire; for this would be arrogating to ourselves wisdom and knowledge equal to the ever-blessed and exalted One. But at this point we should submit, and never disturb ourselves with the perplexing reflection; for no human research will ever be able to understand a question which there are no means of solving, unless God himself should vouchsafe an especial revelation, and tender us a greater share of knowledge of his ways than is yet in our possession.

In the foregoing, I have briefly endeavoured to answer an objection on which infidels so much rely. I approached it, as I have done on other questions, with no view of showing my skill as a disputant, but solely as a humble vindicator of the pure word of God.—I trust, that his spirit has guided me sufficiently to confirm your minds, if not altogether to remove every doubt. One more worthy, more learned, and more able, might doubtlessly have done the subject more justice; but such as I am, I sincerely hope, that the arguments adduced and the illustrations given have proved to you (at least they have done so to myself): That "the law of God is perfect, it refreshes

the soul; the judgments of the Lord are upright, they are righteous together," and that objections raised only tend to confirm the believer the stronger in his well-founded faith. Aye, believing in the Lord's truth, and confiding in his law, are the balm of life, the source of peace of mind on earth, and of unending delight hereafter; but to doubt of his rectitude, to waver in our faith, will lead to inevitable destruction. It is not blind faith, a confidence in things or dogmas not understood, that is demanded; but a conviction that in God there is no fault, and that whatever is inexplicable to us of his workings toward ourselves and others is ascribable, not to Him, but to our imperfect vision and to our circumscribed knowledge, which cannot be removed till we have cast off the mortal coil, which now encumbers our souls in this state of probation. And thus we read in the last verse of Hosea: "Who is wise and marks it, intelligent and knows it, that faultless are the ways of the Lord, and the righteous walk therein, but the wicked stumble upon them." Let us then be the righteous, whose meekness sees nothing but justice in the ways of God; and let us shun the thoughts of the wicked, who would dare to rise in judgment against Him who is Almighty in strength and All-powerful, and whose wisdom is without measure!

Father! Thou spokest through thy prophet that Thou wouldst be a small sanctuary to us in our captivity. O do Thou fulfil thy promise to us who pray for thy assistance in this house, which thy children have consecrated to thy service! Ten years,\* we acknowledge it in humility and thankfulness, have now elapsed since the doors of this house of prayer were first opened to admit the faithful to the footstool of thy glory which invisibly sits enthroned among us. O let thy light spread from this spot unto the minds of thy children, let them see the righteousness of thy ways, and may for many years assemblies after assemblies of the faithful come here to worship Thee in truth and sincerity. And O, vouchsafe thy protection to this congregation, and preserve them free from corroding care, from sickness, and from affliction; and hold thy shield over us, that no

\* The new Synagogue, Mikveh Israel, was consecrated on Sabbath *Bo-el-Paroh* of the year 5585, ten years before the above was spoken.

oppression from the stranger to thy name and worship may reach us. And if in our obduraey we should go astray, if we will join in our wickedness the nations of the earth, and be like them; then let the outpoured anger which Thou hast threatened through thy prophet Ezekiel, fall on us in mercy, and guide us, through it, back to thy service; for we know that in punishing even Thou only wilt our own happiness. May it be further thy will, O our Father and God of our ancestors, that this congregation, the children of the house of the Hope of Israel, may ever be acceptable to Thee, and may thy protection be held out over this house, that it may never want for those who will flock to it to worship Thee after the ordinances of thy law. And do Thou, in thy infinite mercy, grant us peace and prosperity, and remove from among us causeless hatred and envy, and plant thy love and thy fear in our hearts that we may not sin; so that walking in thy presence we may be worthy of thy favour, together with all Israel our brethren. Amen!

Shebat 6th. }  
February 5th. } 5595.

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### DISCOURSE XXXVIII.

#### RECOMPENSE AND RETRIBUTION.

O FATHER, to whom from the going out to the setting of the sun hearts are raised with adoration, cause thy light to fill our minds with wisdom, and open Thou our souls to receive the true knowledge of thy greatness and goodness.—And when the ills of life pass over us, when troubles on troubles are thickly heaped on our heads: O then cause us to behold the light springing out of darkness, which Thou hast always sent to console those who in righteousness feared and loved Thee. Amen!

## BRETHREN!

Institutions, human and divine, have been devised to prevent the doing of evil, commands upon commands have been promulgated to admonish the world from the commission of wrong; and yet we see the right, the universally acknowledged right, disregarded, and the universally admitted wrong daily practised. This fact is by no means flattering to our self-love, nor is it without its baneful effects upon the spectators of the wrong that is done. The evil committed by the parent is an excuse for the child and the grandchild to go and do likewise, and the way of death, if trodden by the mother, appears a path leading to endless pleasures to the thoughtless daughter. The pretext is that the child need not be better than the father, as though the wrong committed by one could be beautified by its being farther propagated in a succeeding generation. And what can be more absurd than such reasoning, if reasoning it can be called? is one man to stammer because his father was heavy of speech? is one to limp because his mother was lame? is one brother to endeavour to become cross-eyed, because the eldest of the family has unfortunately an obliquity of vision? True, the moralist has to acknowledge, that the mania called fashion has at times made lispings seem a beauty in speaking, and has imposed upon the multitude modes of dress and habits of life extremely pernicious to health or even to personal beauty which is endeavoured to be promoted. But is it reasonable that religion and morality should accommodate themselves to deformity, because deformity has become fashionable, or because an example of this kind has been set by one high in authority, renowned for wisdom, or loved as an esteemed parent, teacher, or friend? What has another's doing wrong to do with my own course of life? am I less accountable, because I have associates in sin? is my turpitude less heinous, because another is equally guilty with myself?—All these questions need only to be stated to answer themselves, and the cause of virtue, of piety, and of religion, which are all the same thing, obedience to God's law, must be furthered by a proper investigation of the same.—Now it may be asked: "How is it that so much crime is constantly practised, since the knowledge of the right is so universally

spread abroad?"—To this it may be answered, that the apparent impunity with which many commit crimes causes others to view sin as a thing not so much to be abhorred; and looking only at the surface of things, if an action is not very abhorrent, it may be attempted, and if it be once attempted, the commission of it, and the satisfaction its contemplation in thoughts affords, render it at length as something more desirable even than the opposite virtue. But the impunity with which sin is practised is more apparent than real; for though the lightning of Heaven does not immediately consume the blasphemer; for though the sudden pestilence does not annihilate instantly the Sabbath-breaker; for though the earth does not open and swallow up, like in times of old the rebellious Korah, those who violate the covenant of Abraham, to whom God spoke: "Walk before me and be perfect:" still the sinners may rest assured that their sin is not forgotten, and that not one action of theirs will go ultimately without its condign visitation. And then God, our Father, is a merciful Being, who waits with long patience and paternal kindness to see whether the strayed one will not return to his embrace, and throwing off his load of guilt, exclaim in the sincerity of a renovated heart: "Father, thou who knowest the weakness of the human heart, receive in kindness the returning, repentant child."—But even grant, that the sinner will never repent, that year after year, month after month, week after week, day after day, nay, hour after hour, he increases the amount of debt he incurs to God: yet we may rest assured, that no length of time, no distance of place, and no change of circumstances will hide the malefactor from the all-seeing Eye, whose search penetrates into all secrets, into all space, and into all time. And thus, therefore, if even no cloud whatever should darken the prosperity of the wicked one, if no gnawing, no compunction, of a disturbed overcharged conscience should ever disturb his waking thoughts or his sleeping hours: still a life of earthly bliss may be followed by those awful torments, pains and punishments to which the holy Scriptures allude, but of which no particular description has been vouchsafed to us. And of this speaks Isaiah in the end of his prophecy: "And they will go out and look at the corpses of the men, who have acted wickedly towards me; for their worm

shall not die, nor their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abomination to all flesh." It is true that many persons ridicule the idea of punishment after death; but their ridicule does in nowise remove the fact of its being so. And grant, that the belief we entertain were not founded upon fact: at all events there cannot be any doubt of the possibility of a continuance to exist after this mortal body has been dissolved again into dust and ashes, and of the likelihood, that as there is an existence separate and distinct from earthly existence, there may also be reward and punishment separate and distinct from earthly reward and punishment.—We must admit, that the existence of a soul entirely severed from the body, the existence of a spirit without the slightest attributes of matter, is something very difficult of comprehension to us; but on the other hand, such a state of things is not by any means impossible, even according to the views of a worldly philosophy; and no one dares to deny at least this possibility, till he has, more than has been done hitherto, found out the hidden properties of matter—what are the vital fluids of inorganic nature, such as heat, light, and electricity; what is the ultimate consistency of material things; and by what conformation, unless it be a vital spark, a part of the Deity from above, man alone is enabled to use an articulate language at will, and make thousands of changes in a few elementary sounds, till he has elicited the innumerable variety of words and of syllables which constitute the languages of mankind; by what means, unless it be by a thinking soul, a spirit apart from matter, he can overcome almost every obstacle, which inert matter or brute force oppose to his progress. I could multiply these unanswerable arguments a thousand-fold; I might instance all the improvements in the arts and sciences, the progress in civilization, which late years have witnessed, to prove the existence of a peculiar essence, which we for want of a better term call the *human soul*, which is different, in every sense of the word, from organized nature which surrounds us; but it would be useless and moreover tiresome to you, my brethren, who with me, as Jews and as believers, fully believe in the permanence of our soul in being after the separation of the body.—And can it be possible, even if there were no light from revelation to inform us, that a system so noble,

so incomprehensibly great, could have been created for no other purpose than to enable a handsomer mould of clay than that of the dog to live only for a brief space of time, more comfortably perhaps, but at last, just like a dog, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to fight, to snarl, to propagate its species, and to sink at length into death, into darkness, into oblivion, into non-existence? What needed man the inextinguishable thirst for knowledge, the inexhaustible desire for ulterior happiness, if he were created for no other end? Would he for that alone be enabled to cross the ocean in search of wisdom; ascend beyond the clouds in search of knowledge; dive into the depth of the sea, go down into the bowels of the earth in search of adventure, and direct his searching gaze into the starry heaven: would God have given him such vast extensive powers, I ask, merely that he might be liable to more distress, subject to more misfortunes, exposed to more diseases than the dog, but like him to die away into non-existence?—The idea is too monstrous to be assumed, even for argument's sake, as reasonable; and we may freely assert, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul will only be disputed by the wicked transgressor of God's law, who thereby vainly hopes to steel his heart against the self-accusations of his own conscience, that he may be enabled to follow the path of sin without any compunctious visiting of his inward monitor.—For the sake therefore of following the bent of a sinful inclination, for the purpose of chiming in with a pernicious fashion which leads to ungodliness, does the reckless sinner deny the most consolatory hope which religion and revelation impart, and thereby he incurs the more deservedly the very punishment which he vainly strives to reason away, as though reasoning, even the most plausible, were in the least able to remove what is true.—But brightly beams the light of hope for those who are watchful over their deeds, for the humble and the pious, who, when suffering the ills which as men they cannot even desire to escape, look upon the world beyond the grave as their true abode, where they may dwell securely, unburthened from care and sorrow, released from pain and grief, enlightened in wisdom, purified by trials, and blest of their Maker, and basking in the sunshine of his unending and unchanging favour. And thus said Solomon in his Eccle-



siastes eighth chapter, 11th and 12th verses: "Because punishment does not follow evil deeds quickly, therefore becomes the heart of the children of men careless and practises the evil.—But let the sinner commit sins a hundred-fold, and experience indulgence: yet am I convinced, that true happiness will be the sure recompense of those that fear God, whilst they fear Him."—And yet people doubt, and become faint-hearted under every tribulation; and when sorrow and trouble enter their doors in the round which the evil destiny takes in the world, they imagine their own misfortune the most grievous, and they accuse the Deity of injustice in heaping so much distress upon them who are so very innocent, so very charitable, so much devoted to the practice of religious duties! And as they see their neighbours' faces drest up with smiles, as they behold their friends in apparent happiness, as they do not discover that their enemies have any cause to complain: they come to the conclusion that they themselves alone are unhappy; and they ask, what advantage it can be to them that they practise so much self-denial in the cause of religion and the exercise of humanity, since they are exposed to trials, from which others are exempt? Weak souls, like these we have been describing, are but too apt to yield their shallow piety to their misfortunes, and their untried honesty becomes changed into fraud and deceit; as they conceive that piety and rectitude do not bring any advantage, because they have found out, that they in the exercise of both suffered misfortunes which, as said, they believe others did not encounter.—But such arguing is altogether false. Those, whose faces bear the everlasting smile are not necessarily happy; those whom the world terms fortunate are not always to be envied; and but lift the veil which hides their inmost heart, and you might weep over the distresses of the smiling sufferer; could you but dive into the soul of the envied happy one, you would be startled at the accumulation of wo you would there discover. And as for the idea that those who are irreligious and dishonest have the advantage over you who are suffering the accumulated ills of life: it is all again but outward show; impiety, although it scoffs, is still but a wretched defence against the canker-worm of conscience; and he who luxuriates in the spoils abstracted from

the deceived friend, from the confiding stranger, the beguiled widow, and the helpless orphan, though a credulous world flatter and fawn upon him, he too is at heart a wretch, tormented beyond endurance, fearing exposure, dreading the loss of a reputation which he has endeavoured to establish, and trembling at the thought of being deprived of that ill-gotten wealth, to obtain which he has sold his immortal soul to perdition.—This much may be said in answer to the complaint, that we alone are suffering. And in reply to the accusation of God's justice, as though He punished us when not deserving it, we should consider that not one of us is free from fault, that not one of us can boast of having never infringed the laws which God has ordained. If then we do suffer, let us not forget that we are sinning mortals, and that the infliction is sent to admonish us that we have erred, or to warn us that the path we were intending to pursue was one of perdition. For God, who knows the thoughts of men even before they are accomplished, sends us tokens of displeasure at our intended conduct, if we have in other cases followed his will; as the prophetess says: "He guards the feet of his righteous ones;" and as Ezekiel says in another place: "And what rises on your heart shall not be done." Now therefore, if such a warning is sent, we should, in place of repining, investigate and see in what we have been sinning, and amend our lives whilst there is yet time, before the sands in the hourglass of life have entirely run to waste; and if we intended any wrong, if our uniform prosperity caused our hearts to wax proud and our soul to become presumptuous: we should bow with thankfulness to the chastisement, and bless the all-wise One for having stretched out as it were his potent hand, and snatched us as a firebrand from amidst the consuming fire.—But if we grumble at the dispensation instead of repenting; if we will not heed the warning when it is kindly given; if we resist the whisperings of the holy spirit which tells us to beware; if we in short hurry down the road which leads to the pit of destruction: who is it that is blameable? is it He whose ways are all just and true? or we, the sinning, foolish worms of the earth, who, despite of our short-sightedness and our exposure to fallibility and corruption, dare to measure our insufficient righteousness, be this ever so great, against the justice of Him who cannot

err? Besides it must not be forgotten, that perhaps there never was an infliction sent upon the righteous which was beyond their endurance,\* and those who have stood firm amidst their trials, how purely have they come out of the furnace in which their integrity had been probed.—Besides the cause of sin just exposed there is another which assumes the air of a philanthropic and even a pious cast of reasoning, and thus militates against the dictates of revealed religion. Persons wishing to free themselves from religious observances assert constantly, that the law could not possibly have been intended to act with such burthensome severity upon us. They say, the benignant Being whom we adore could not have any pleasure in our punishing our bodies with fasting; He who loves all his creatures alike could never think to lay Israel under so many and disadvantageous restrictions as regards the observance of the Sabbaths and the holydays; the abstaining from forbidden food; the restriction with regard to forming family connections with persons of other nations, and laws of similar import; and some even inveigh with apparent bitterness and sincerity against the sealing of our children with the covenant of Abraham, as cruel and barbarous.—And such reasoning as this it is by which people mislead themselves and others; “God,” they say, “could not command such things;” but we say and maintain He did command them, and moreover threatens punishment for non-obedience. Now even waive this; and what does the objection amount to? to no more than this; that whereas persons find the Jewish law demanding certain trials of their faith, which cannot under ordinary contingencies cause

\* This brings to my mind the affecting history of an Israelitish female, who in the midst of the sack of the town in which she lived saw a brutal soldier entering her apartment. He endeavoured to seize her; “Stop,” she said, “I can give you a charm which if you wear it will prevent your being wounded.” The soldier incredulous asked her if she was in earnest; “I am perfectly in earnest, and to prove my sincerity you may fire at me as I hold this paper to my heart.” She stood firm; held a paper upon which the pretended charm was written to her heart, the soldier fired, and to his amazement the Jewish maiden lay a bleeding corpse at his feet; she died, but her spirit came undefiled before her Maker. Thus we see that, as this example partly illustrates, there is no situation in which the righteous are altogether without that heavenly assistance which always comes to their aid.

the most remote actual harm, and being unwilling to make any sacrifices whatever except such as tally precisely with their notions of justice and conscience, they reject them at once as unreasonable. Is this not true? But let us take a few of the objections and review them in brief detail.—“God cannot wish that we should fast,” the lukewarm assert. But we say He does wish it, provided the punishing of the body is accompanied by a sincere repentance and by a knowledge why and wherefore we fast, that is to say, that in doing penance we direct our thoughts and our prayers to the almighty One from whom all forgiveness must come.—Even without this absolute preparation for repentance there is one day of penance ordained, on which every Israelite is to abstain from food and drink; by which it was intended to effect, that at the annual recurrence of so solemn a day, many, if not all, should be led to look into their deeds and to amend whatever they may find defective, and to endeavour to heal up breaches of social friendship and brotherly love, which clashing interests may have interrupted in other periods of the year.—Is such an institution reasonable?—From amidst the mass of idolaters, worshippers of graven and hewn images, God wanted to select a people to be his own peculiar treasure for ever; and He appeared to them when they groaned under heavy afflictions, and He redeemed them from servitude to freedom on the day the anniversary whereof we are soon to celebrate.—His people they were to be, to receive his holy laws as a trust, but which should ultimately be the rule of life for all mankind, when they had become fit for the pure ideal worship of his holiness and greatness. To prevent their being mixed up with other nations He cast their lot in the most lovely portion, and He surrounded Jacob with a wall of defence as it were, by imparting to them peculiar statutes and ordinances, and He gave them in love and kindness, his Sabbaths of rest and his holydays for rejoicing, and He interdicted them from mingling in the indulgencies of the animal frame with the nations of the earth; and He therefore forbade things to these permitted; and also, as the Israelites were but the fewest of nations, He ordained that no Jew should take as the wife of his bosom the daughter of the stranger, lest by so doing the name of Jacob might become lost

from amongst the nations of the earth.—And from our birth we were bought as God's servants, and therefore when one week has passed over the infant's head the seal of God's covenant, holy and everlasting, is to be impressed on him; and God says: "For my servants are the children of Israel." By this ceremony it is that we are made perfect, that we are rendered just as was commanded, and the parent that can refuse his child this induction into the holy covenant has left it imperfect; for only through its observance was Abraham made perfect.—But alas! we have fallen upon evil times! Philosophizing by ignorant and presumptuous pretenders is the order of the day, and well nigh have those, who would gladly raise their voice against the spreading corruption, been rendered dumb, since they perceive their counsels neglected, and their solemn admonitions unheeded. Aye, they are commanded to be silent, the world wishes not the truth to be told; yes, we can sin, we can glory in sinning; but let no one dare to tell us that we are sinning; we must needs hate him who reveals us to ourselves; and thus we go on calling our teachers bigots and fanatics, and flatter ourselves that this is the real balsam which must and will for ever silence the voice of an accusing conscience. "All is priestcraft! all is the invention of ignorance! all the machinations of dark ages!" and if called on but to listen to reason, we turn away our unwilling ear, and say: "We are already convinced, we know better, much better than our ignorant ancestors."—But sons and daughters of Israel! shall it indeed come to pass, shall the dreaded day then come, that the name which has so long graced the pages of history shall at last fade away? Will you, yourselves, through obduracy accomplish that which united nations failed to effect by persecutions unheard of, by banishments, by slaughter of all that was good and wise among us? Is the institution of yon holy Decalogue a work of priestcraft—of deception?—is the promulgation of the unity of God the invention of ignorance?—is the enactment of our benignant laws the machination of dark ages?—And what are we to receive in the place of all this great and glorious institution?—the dictates of a heartless, soulless, lifeless philosophy, the imaginings of selfish, proud, arrogant men, who affecting

learning, but really ignorant ; who pretending to virtue, but really vicious, dare to call themselves philosophers, as though they alone, pre-eminently, were the lovers and true friends of wisdom!—Shall it come to this? No! never will such debasement spread over the earth, never will the world stand and see such wickedness consummated!—In the meantime, God will always preserve men, as instruments, who will be deputed to speak of and expound the law proclaimed from Sinai ; and if the voice of one be hushed by death, another will be there to supply his place, and if one should like Jonah be afraid from one cause or another to announce the word that is within him, another and another yet will be at hand to fulfil the sacred mission.—And answer me : was ever Israel so forsaken as that no one could be found to stand forth as the defender of the law? and can we believe that the world, that we, should so much retrograde, as to have none willing to go out with God's message upon his lips? No, let sinners not flatter themselves, that the voice is dead which spoke through Moses. God never dies, and even were there not a single man to speak, the word itself survives still, and will yet longer survive and strike terror into the heart which yields itself to sin.

Thus I have endeavoured to give, as briefly as I could, answers to the questions which presented themselves to our view ; the task however has been but very imperfectly accomplished, since so little has been said of what suggests itself upon even a cursory view of the subject. But as it is one so fruitful in contemplation, I may call your attention to it again perhaps in a short time.—Having now in a measure exposed by the light of reason and sound common sense, alone, the folly of the motives of sin, let us turn our attention to the concurrent announcements of prophecy, which treat upon the subject. Malachi says, chapter iii, verse 5 :

וקרבתי אליכם למשפט והייתי ער ממהר במכשפים  
ובמנאפים ובנשבעים לשקר ובעשקי שכר שכיר אלמנה  
ויתום ומטי גר ולא יראוני אמר ה' צבאות : כי אני ה' לא  
שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם : מלאכי ג' ה' :

“And I will approach to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against wizards, and adulterers, and those that swear falsely, and that withhold the pay of the hireling, and that injure the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, and did not fear me, says the Lord of Zebaoth. For I the Lord change not, and you, children of Jacob do not perish.”

Here the prophet announces the punishment which is to befall the transgressors against the law of God, and confirms the certainty thereof, by stating that He, the Lord, changes not, and consequently, if the punishment be even deferred, the day of judgment will come at length, when the unchangeable One will be sure to mete out even-handed justice. And continues the prophet: “And you shall go out and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that served God and him that has not served Him. For behold the day will come burning like a furnace, and all the transgressors and evil-doers shall be like straw, and it shall burn them up the day that comes, says the Lord of Zebaoth, who will not leave them root nor branch.—But to you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall shine, and healing shall be in his wings.” In the same strain speaks Isaiah, chapter lxxv: “I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, that go the way which is not good after their own thoughts: a people — that sit upon graves, and lodge among the monuments, that eat the flesh of the swine, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels, that say, ‘Stand by thyself, come not near me; I am holier than thou;’ these are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.”—And says Isaiah: “Thus says the Lord: As the new wine is found in the grape; and one sayeth destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servant’s sake, not to destroy the whole; and I will bring out from Jacob a seed, and from Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and my elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.—But you that forsake the Lord—behold my servants shall eat and you shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink, and you shall be thirsty; behold my servant shall be glad, and you shall be ashamed! Behold my servants shall shout from a joyous heart, and you shall cry from a heart of pain, and howl from a broken spirit.”—And in conclusion he says of the righteous: “And it shall come to pass, that ere they

call and I will answer, whilst yet they are speaking, I will hear.”—Ezekiel also confirms the foregoing promises, when saying, chapter xx : “As sure as I live, says the Lord God, if not with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured forth I will rule over you.”—And farther: “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you then in the covenant which has been handed down. And I will select from among you those that have rebelled and transgressed against me, from the land of their sojourning I will bring them out, but to the land of Israel they shall not come, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”—I have in the above endeavoured to give you a few passages, selected from a very large number, to prove that the judgment of God must sooner or later overtake the transgressors, and if his mercy should delay the punishment, it is nevertheless only deferred, not relinquished.—What has thus been proved by common sense and Holy Writ, and what your own experience so amply confirms, requires no admonition to recommend to your serious attention. Let it then sink deeply into your hearts, you who are from the house of Israel, you who have in your ancestors partaken of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt; let it be a lesson never to be forgotten, that upon the way of religion there is ultimate life, although the path be beset by dangers and pain; and that the road of sin leads to destruction, although its first appearance may be ever so inciting, and seemingly invite to a multitude of pleasures.—You who are fathers! you who are mothers! impress on your children’s minds, that those alone who love God can have peace, but that to the wicked there is no peace! and you youth and maidens who wish to reach a happy old age, and who desire a tranquil and peaceful end, remember that long life and happiness, and peace of mind, and the favour of God are only to be found upon the way of righteousness.

Father above! Thine be the glory and the kingdom, as already Thine is the power, the greatness and goodness. Let thy countenance shine unto all the world, and call and guide all children of men to thy holy service. And grant to us, thy people, whom Thou didst redeem from Egypt by thy power which Thou didst display, thy fatherly protection, and preserve us from annihilation in our captivity. And O, cause thy king-



dom to take root in our hearts, and incline our souls to return to Thee in sincerity. And when Thou comest to chastise us for our transgressions, O remember then that we are flesh, sinners like our fathers. And may it be thy will to remember again the seed of Jacob in favour, and send us thy anointed servant, the Messiah, son of David, and again show us wonders, as Thou didst when we went forth from Egypt. Amen.

Nissan 11th. }  
 April 10th. } 5595.

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### DISCOURSE XXXIX.

#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

O HOLY ONE, whom the heavens and the heavens of heaven cannot contain, come to dwell in the hearts of thy children that worship thee!—O infinite One, to whose existence there is no beginning and no ending, be with us thy creatures in the day of our affliction, and save and protect us, whenever we call on Thee.—O incomprehensible One, who art hidden from all thought, elevated high—far above—immeasurably—beyond all conception, come Thou and instruct our thirsting souls of thy wisdom, and instil into our hearts a love and knowledge of thy benignant law, which in thy abundant mercy Thou gavest unto our ancestors, when Thou didst stretch forth the right hand of thy salvation to buy them unto Thee as a treasure and a people. And if we err, do Thou, who art the most merciful, lead us back to thy embrace, and shield us there from evil as the eagle overshadows his brood by the protection of his wings; for Thou art our Father, and Thou art our King, and beside Thee there is not to us Shield, Protector, and Saviour, and without Thee there is no God; but Thou alone art everlasting, and

Thine then be the glory, and the kingdom, and the adoration of all flesh. Amen.

### BRETHREN!

To the man whose eyes are opened by a knowledge of the way of righteousness; to the soul that adores her God and Creator; to the mind filled with love for mankind; it must be a matter of surprise and grief to observe, among the multifarious and varied classes that constitute the mass of mankind, so little perception of the utility and necessity of a religious education for their children, or of the duty every one is under to make himself familiar with the behests of revelation. What pains are not taken to teach our children the tongues of various nations; how much labour is not spent in the pursuit of worldly sciences; what stress is not laid upon the acquisition of mere accomplishment even;—but only touch the subject of religion and branches therewith connected, and you are at once told, that it is quite useless to learn Hebrew, a language no more spoken, consequently of no practical use; and as for religious knowledge—that can be obtained by reading the sacred writings; and morality can be gotten very easily by going to churches of the various sects amongst whom we live; practical knowledge of political sciences are promulgated in worldly schools; and consequently there can be no necessity for spending years and months and days in the obtainment of religious information, properly so termed. That such reasoning prevails, cannot be denied, and that it is very fallacious and very pernicious, must be evident from the first view a candid man takes of the subject. Still so many are misled, and so many have become irreligious, immoral, and I fear infidel, that I beg you, my brethren, to bear with me whilst I endeavour to show the necessity of a particular religious education for our children, and the obligation which rests upon parents to qualify themselves for the holy task incumbent on them, as fathers and mothers, of bringing up the pledges of conjugal love, the trust confided to them by God, in a way which best comports with the love and duty which the creature owes to the Creator, and which secures in the best possible manner individual and general happiness.

I have alluded to a knowledge of the Hebrew as in some manner connected with religion; and since all our forms of worship and our sacred records are in that language: it may not be out of place to offer a few observations to prove the necessity of retaining it in our worship, and to deprecate a substitution of any other in its stead. A national tongue binds together the people speaking it in one bond, and cements a union hardly otherwise attainable. Such a thing may be, as nations or tribes speaking different languages to be governed by the same law; but where is that fellow-feeling, that brotherly attachment which people of the same speech feel? Not to go farther than a neighbouring country, which was conquered now about eighty years ago, where the people have never been molested, as far as I know, in their laws, privileges, and even mere prejudices; add to which that the benefits of an extension of wholesome laws, of freedom from public burdens, of a wide-spreading commerce have been conferred: and still the difference of language between the rulers and the ruled has been the constant cause of heart-burning and contention, and a united effort for the public good is hardly thought of. Let us apply this single fact, which can be strengthened by a thousand others, from ancient and modern story, to our own case. In the land of the East, where first were cradled the germs of civilization and knowledge, our nation sprung up like a tender sprout, like a feeble shoot, from amidst the multitudes of nations. Abraham wandered out of his father's idolatrous home and went forth over the fair regions of the South, the harbinger of peace wherever he came. He spoke the language of Shem his ancestor, a language forcible and clear, full of elegant imagery and true to nature in its figures and sublime conceptions. With the growth of the people the language also grew into a national dialect, and even in the midst of the powerful and polished state of Egypt the Israelites still retained the language of Heber. Think you it was a close bond during their dreadful sufferings? Most undoubtedly; and what better could have been found to make their hearts glow with rapturous hope, when the father bondman told to the child, whose prospect too was slavery and bondage, of the wonders which God had displayed unto their simple shepherd-ancestors, and how He had promised

(using the sacred words of the holy Jacob) והיה אלהים עמכם והשיב אהכם אל ארץ אבותיכם “And God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers?” Think you that hope could have fled at words like these? Think you that the language too did not fall on the ear like sweet music which bids the mourning soul rejoice?—Anon the law was given, and in words clear and distinct the Most High announced his will.—The words spoken we have read this day, and the language again was the language of Abraham. Israel conquered the land of promise, and dwelt in their inheritance in security. And nobly too did the language do its work, and there arose a Deborah to sing the song; there was a David, who attuned his harp to inimitable and undying praise; there was a Solomon, whose wisdom yet teaches the world; an Isaiah, whose eloquence yet rouses the heart; a Jeremiah, who yet bids the tears to flow at the downfall of the populous city, and a host of others, whose genius and whose piety must in all ages command admiration. And when Israel fell, because they had become sinful, and when the language was supplanted by the speech of various nations; it found restorers in Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Malachi, besides many more who assisted them in the holy task. And although the Hebrew has been banished by our dispersion from being our every-day language: it yet holds, I may freely say, a higher place, it contains all that remains of the wisdom of our ancestors; nay more, it holds all the commands which God revealed to mankind for their guidance! This is the Hebrew, and this is briefly its history. Despite now of our dispersion—despite of our being, alas! known as Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Poles, Grecians, Tartars, and by numerous other names: still the Hebrew has always maintained its position in the love and the heart of all true Israelites, and has also constituted the bond which has kept united the captivity of Jacob in all parts of the world! And here comes one from the burning plains of Africa; there another from the icy fields of the Arctic regions; yonder pilgrim calls the highlands of middle Asia his home; and this one is an exile from Spain’s blood-stained sierras. And listen! as the *messenger* addresses the throne of Grace, how a simultaneous Amen bursts from all their lips! the language they hear is not to them

the language of the stranger, the sounds, though ancient sounds, are to their ears familiar as the first breathings of childhood's years, and in the land of the stranger, where they all meet but as strangers, the holy tongue is their bond, and by it they do meet as a band of brothers, and all thus unite to call with one voice upon their God, who is truly the Preserver of Israel.— Does it then comport with reason to retain the knowledge of so great a gift? or shall we idly throw it off as a thing whose value is lost; forsake it as a spring whose waters are dried up? Never may this be! The blessing this inheritance has always bestowed is of yet daily recurrence, and who would madly neglect what is to him of vital importance? Thus you have presented to you, brethren, an illustration, an argument would require more time, of the object and advantage of the Hebrew to us, as Jews. It is, namely, our national, our vernacular tongue; it is one of the links in that great chain which has ever firmly bound Israel together as one nation. I take it for granted, that there are but few who wish its knowledge altogether extirpated; but still there are also an immense number, especially in this country, and I grieve to say in this city, perhaps among those who now hear me, that think but lightly of the importance of its acquisition. But as the acquaintance with an instrument so valuable must be in the same proportion useful, it is certainly a matter of surprise that no more is done to further the means of its attainment. As a mere matter of curiosity much is studied; more things again receive attention solely because they are elegant; and therefore it is inconceivable, how a Jew can rest satisfied with an entire ignorance of his sacred language when the opportunity for the removal of such unpardonable ignorance is within his reach. Even if means were not readily at hand, I should still think it the duty of every Israelite, no matter of what sex, station, or capacity, to endeavour to remedy the defect with regard to teachers, or in other words, schools should be established wherein the instruction of the Hebrew should be one of the principal objects of education. If this were done, if the acknowledged defect were to be encountered by a united effort, it is impossible but that the blessing of God would attend the undertaking; and even in this western world, almost at the opposite extreme whence civilization commenced her course, even here I say, men

honouring their brethren by their splendid acquirements in the learning of our ancients, and in a correct knowledge of biblical criticism, would crown the effort so piously undertaken and so happily accomplished.—But I speak of anticipations, of things I fear hardly to be realized!—too much of self-aggrandisement is the order of the day;—disinterested exertions for public good are occurrences but rarely witnessed;—and an enterprize which instead of bringing gain might occasion pecuniary loss, is not of the nature to claim the attention of capitalists, of men, who, having already as much or more than they can consume in all human probability, must still go on increasing their stock of uncounted wealth, till all at once death arrests their extended grasp ere the perhaps intended good was even commenced. Some may think that I am too unjust towards those whom the world calls rich, it may appear to savour of disappointment to charge upon a class the transgressions of a few: but in reply to this I have merely to remark, that the fact of nothing or next to nothing having been done in so many places, and among others in this very town, warrants me in saying that persons having the power to lend a helping hand cannot be very sincere in their professions towards furthering an education, the necessity of which has been amply shown, whilst they rest satisfied with merely giving vent to expressions of good wishes, and leave actions to others than themselves. Our nation suffers much in the estimation of the gentile world by such inexcusable negligence; and those, who value such a standing and fame among the non-Israelites so highly, may rest assured that their indifference towards their own brethren and their own religious interests does by no means raise their standing; on the contrary, if we exert ourselves for ourselves a little more energetically than we do, we may certainly succeed in obtaining the admiration of the gentiles, although their love may be denied to us, which I must sincerely declare is hardly attainable by an opposite course even. Yet let us hope, at least let hope not die away altogether, that the ancient spirit of devotion may one day be rekindled, and that the lukewarmness for the holy cause may be succeeded by an earnestness and zeal characteristic of a renovated love for righteous exertions. If this should happen, willingly would I be charged with having

falsely accused and unjustly judged persons whose real value, and the depth of whose piety I had underrated. Yet, till this is made manifest, let the humble individual who now addresses you not be blamed for giving utterance to what he honestly believes to be the truth, especially as the words employed cannot wound the feelings, pride, or self-love, or whatever else you may term it, of any one.—The consideration of the foregoing has almost insensibly drawn me from my purpose ; I certainly had but intended merely to touch the importance of the Hebrew language ; but if I should have succeeded in arresting your attention upon this interesting subject, I shall consider it as having done a service in the promotion of religious education.

Let us now revert to the general necessity there is for persons to become familiar with religious duties, and of the obligation they are under to impart the knowledge so obtained to the rising generation. Some one may now object : “ That religion is so plainly taught in the Bible, that it requires no other study or investigation than reading the Scriptures.” No one will deny that the sacred writings contain alone the whole system of revelation, and that their study and perusal must greatly improve the understanding. Nevertheless it is not to be lost sight of, that a great share of knowledge and of pious feelings are a prerequisite towards entering upon this important study.—Take for example, that one should not be able to read, what use should he make of the book placed in his hand ?—Suppose again one were blind, how is he to read ?—Again, let us take a worldly man, constantly engaged in business, what time will he find to read ? These are obvious cases ; but there are an immense number of others equally powerful though less apparent in preventing persons from reading the Bible with profit. A person reading may not understand the phraseology employed ; he may be ignorant of every collateral information which could enable him to comprehend the subject he peruses. Another again may have seen wickedness daily practised ; another in his youth may have heard the Bible-tenets abused and ridiculed, perhaps by his very parents : in all such cases, I would ask, what effect can mere reading have, without admitting a direct miracle almost, but to leave the reader either ignorant as he was before, or as wicked as he was when he began.

It is not necessary to argue a thing so very plain any further, especially when we daily see, that without previous instruction but little is learned by intelligent and great minds even. There are so many avocations in the world, so much there is always to distract our attention, that we hardly can fix our minds to any particular pursuit or to any one especial study. If we are therefore to profit by any thing, or to become eminent in any calling, we must begin to learn early, and to apply at a later period the knowledge obtained by such slow degrees and at the expense of so much pains and labour.—Ask the musician when he began his brilliant career? generally the answer will be: “When I was a child.”—The accomplished dancer: “I began at seven years old.” To go to higher accomplishments: a painter evinced talents as a boy which had to be cultivated by a life of application; the advocate commences his studies when he begins to speak, and at his death at an advanced age he has yet much to learn; the physician on the day of his departure, perhaps, finds his whole theory of medicine to have been fallacious; in short every pursuit, from the smallest to the highest, requires its apprenticeship, without which nothing can be gained; and yet to hear persons speak we should suppose that religious knowledge, the perception of our duties and appointment on earth, the study of the word of God were matters, which can be picked up as it were by the child as he goes along in the world, or that perhaps such high knowledge is intuitive, and therefore to be obtained without any labour whatever. But who will maintain in sober earnestness that we learn our duties from our own invention? or rather, is it not reduced to an uncontrovertible certainty that all knowledge, even that of morals and religion, so called by way of distinction, must be acquired by slow degrees? How then is the child to become religious? how is he to read the Bible understandingly, if instruction upon the most essential subject of life is to be withheld from him?—Some however may say: “That they will admit, that male children should be carefully instructed, that it is perfectly reasonable that those who are to become, as it is called, ‘the lords of creation’ should be qualified for their stations by a careful training, that their morals should be carefully attended to and their mental culture strictly watched over. But females,



they aver, need not that knowledge, theirs being a more dependant lot, it is immaterial whether they are high-learned in sacred literature or versed in the holy tongue; in short for them superficial reading is enough, for them it were sufficient if the lighter branches of elegant learning were cultivated by them." As usual, this reasoning contains with some sprinkling of soundness a great share of fallacy, which will be apparent upon a slight review of the question. It is not to be denied, that it is almost entirely useless for the female to become learned in the strictest sense of the word, it would indeed unsex her, if she were to study the legal profession; if she were to step abroad as a physician; if she, forgetful of feminine decorum, would lay on the harness of war, and wage a mortal combat with the enemy. Well has it been commanded: "There shall not be man's apparel upon a woman," for the female's sphere is not the highway, not the public streets, not the embattled field, not the public halls. But her home should be the place of her actions, there her influence should be felt, to soothe, to calm, to sanctify, to render happy the rugged career of a father, a brother, a husband, or a child. Yet, how is she to become qualified for this holy, for this noble, task, if you leave her mind a blank—a barren waste—open to the evil seed which the world's corruption is but too apt to scatter? Behold this woman, watch her well, and then decide upon her claims to your regard and affections. She is proud, vain, frivolous, ignorant, vicious, and you despise her, she no doubt is undeserving of your regard; but the fault is hardly hers, it is her parents and teachers that are to blame. God had given her beauty, a mind alive to the charms of nature; a soul delighting in the romantic and the affectionate; wealth also had not been denied her, since her father has all which a covetous world might desire. Now mark how this girl is educated. Before she can lisp she hears her charms praised; her will is almost law to the dependants of the family; the rod of correction she never is made to feel, no matter what her faults may be; the word of reproof even is but sparingly administered; her schooling, next, is not of the highly morally elevated, but again the frivolous, the showy—grant it be elegant; but her soul is all the time uncultivated, because that is never regarded as of the least importance to her; her beauty is to win

admiration ; her accomplishments are to captivate, and her wit is to dazzle. And lo ! the bashful girl grows into the lovely woman ; flatterers crowd round her in greater number ; menials in larger swarms now await her commands ; she has perhaps rivals to encounter upon the path of conquest which she has chalked out for herself, or which fond, foolish parents have bidden her to tread ; and what can you expect should be the result, but that she should be proud—vain—frivolous—ignorant—vicious—revengeful, and perhaps at last morally depraved?—This indeed is but a fancy picture of a spoiled beautiful heiress ; but does it not apply almost to every female in a greater or less degree, who has the advantage, or rather the curse of an elegant education and a fashionable parentage ? At the same time the daughters of the commonly so called lower classes are in many respects but little better circumstanced ; since moral culture is with them also much neglected at the expense of worldly and vain acquirements.—I do not wish to say, that my observations hold universally true, but their general correctness cannot be gainsayed. All this must tend to prove that between the two extremes, between unfeminine learning and useless acquirements, the true course should be sought for. Our daughters then should learn early, even whilst yet infants, that they, as well as the other sex, are creatures and dependants of God ; they too should be early told of the greatness, the mercy and the unending goodness of the Almighty ; they should be taught to direct their hopes in affliction, and their confidence in prosperity to the Giver of all good ; they should be informed, that beauty is perishable, wealth is fleeting, joy evernescent, and wisdom fallacious ; they should be impressed with the conviction that flattery is a pernicious gift, dangerous to the receiver ; that the world will crouch and cringe to the prosperous, and turn away with disgust and loathing the confiding one whom they themselves have corrupted ; above all the father should betimes commence to teach his daughter the way she should go ; he should, so to say, be her guide on the road to eternal life ; he should bid her look into the sacred page to gather wisdom and hope from the undying words of Holy Writ ; and admonish her to cull the antidote to affliction from those records where it is taught to us that the virtuous are never forsaken ; especially

however let him inform her, how becoming is meekness, and how lovely is modesty in the beautiful woman, how much more commanding her loveliness must be, if she bears it as a gift of Heaven, not as some gaudy jewel of which the wearer may be proud.—Think you that an education based upon such principles must be beneficial? Even if the time consumed in this training should preclude the acquisition of accomplishment: still far better will it be that our daughters grow up religious women and excellent housewives, than that they be elegant musicians, skilful painters, graceful dancers or pretenders to sciences, which to the great majority of females must be quite useless.—If time is left, if the parent's means will permit it, then some of the more showy branches might with advantage be added; but care should always be taken, that they be viewed as secondary, and that religious instruction and useful solid information should be the first, the most important pursuit.—Whilst on the subject I cannot dismiss it without adding a few words as to the books which are generally considered fit for female reading; I allude to the whole class of fictitious writings, by which I mean romances, novels, and dramas. That some are good, others harmless, is not to be denied; but the majority of them contain false views of morality; a perverted philosophy, and a mawkish sensibility are generally their chief pervading characteristics; and when, as it is often the case, the young mind has not been stored with sound religious knowledge, this kind of literature destroys almost entirely all sound principles, and well nigh may it reduce one to the awful state on which the prophet pronounced the curse: “Wo to those who say to the good evil, and to the evil good.” It were therefore far better, if the whole of such works were banished or set out of the reach of the young; but if this cannot be done, at least do teach the females, at least prepare them with that kind of information, which may act as the antidote to the poison they so plentifully imbibe.—In this manner then let us proceed in the education of our children: let religion form the basis both for males and females, on which the superstructure of useful and ornamental knowledge can then be profitably built; for without the former, as has been shown, the latter can never produce good and wholesome fruits.

In reply to the other assertion: "That Israelites need not give an especial religious instruction to their children, since morality is taught in the churches of other sects, and political rectitude is taught in the schools," we have simply to answer: That much good as may be taught in these places, (we would not be illiberal enough to deny this,) still much is left untaught which to us at least is highly important. The gentile preacher will admonish you to be obedient to God's will and to be pious, meek, and patient. But what are the duties he includes in obedience? They are few indeed compared to our wants; he will not tell you to observe holy the seventh day—he will not tell you to remember the going out of Egypt—not speak of the glorious announcement of the law on this holy festival—not he will inform you how to be holy, as Israel should be holy, to the Lord—not he can teach you to abstain from unlawful food—not he may direct your hopes to a future happy restoration—not he may instruct you, to sum up all in one single idea—not he can instruct you to look up to yon heaven and to behold there the workings of ONE, holy, everlasting, unchangeable Being; for to him the Deity is divided, to him the Creator is changeable. Even let him feel the beauty and the force of the idea of ONE God, does he not then inculcate that the holy law is abolished, that the law of Moses, the promulgation of which we celebrate this day—that this law has been annulled? to make place for what? For an offspring, a changeling rather, whose beauty by no means equals the parent's lustre!—But his eloquence attracts you, the powers of his capacious well-regulated mind make you willing listeners; you go, because his, as you say, is the purer morality, divested of doctrinal jargon, free from religious prejudice, open alike to all mankind.—But go ye as believers in revelation, or as listeners of an exhibition of splendid eloquence? If the latter, well indeed, then admire for ever the eloquent fervour, listen to well-turned phrases, shout approbation to morality without religious restraint, without doctrines of faith, if such a thing be not an utter fallacy. Yet, if you are believers, if you are Israelites, not in words but in your inmost hearts, then you cannot be much benefitted by such advice; true, it may raise your admiration of God's power; the orator may tell you in the words of the holy Book,

to adore and to love the Lord, and excite in your mind religious adoration. Still where are the instructions which are to be based upon such fervour? Do the preacher's words teach you ought thereof? or rather does he not raise a craving within you which he fails, utterly fails, to satisfy? To the house of our God then bend your steps, perchance there is one who is empowered to scatter the seeds of life, unknown to fame he may soever be, not burning eloquence may flow from his lips, not the goods of the world may be his portion, perhaps not even beloved may he be, because he is too uncomprising, too unyielding to the follies of the age: nevertheless he teaches what our ancients taught, he promulges the holy Word which was announced in times of yore from the blessed Sinai; and will you turn to him a deaf ear, which was willingly lent to eloquence? will you not bear with him, whilst he points out the way you should travel to insure your salvation? I hope your hearts, my brethren! may be with him who is one of you, one from the same line, from the seed of the house of Jacob; and that feeling the necessity of religious instruction it will be your endeavour to have always such a teacher, who will fearlessly speak to you of the deeds you have to do and the way you have to walk, instead of resorting to places where with the wholesome water inefficient, or noxious drugs even, may perchance be mixed.

In reference at last to the assertion: "That political knowledge can be obtained at schools where worldly sciences are taught," it would be needless, after what has been said already, to do more than merely call your attention to the absurdity of the position, that political knowledge should effect the least good in reforming individual wickedness, since the whole system is based, from its very nature, upon expediency and utility.

Nothing is left, therefore, to us as Israelites, but to apply ourselves, as in olden days, to the study of the law; to engage in this pursuit with all the light which modern discoveries in science so abundantly furnish, and to do according to the knowledge we may acquire.—If it is thus our duty to learn, it is no less necessary to teach others what is so beneficial to ourselves; and if a parent should unfortunately not be well instructed himself, he is bound to seek a teacher who shall supply the

place which he should have occupied. That this is commanded in the law, as much as any other religious duty, appears from the last commandment which Moses gave before his death :

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְכָל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי  
 מְעִיד בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּצְוֶן אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת  
 אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת : כִּי לֹא דָבָר רֶק הוּא מִכֶּם כִּי  
 הוּא חַיִּיכֶם וּבְדָבָר הַזֶּה תֵּאָרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר  
 אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ : דְּבָרִים לְבִי מו'—מו' :

“And he said to them: Turn your heart to all the words which I testify towards you this day, that you may command them your children, to observe to do all the words of this law. For it is not an empty thing for you, but it is your life, and through this very thing you will have length of days upon the land, which to inherit you are to cross the Jordan.” Deut. xxxii. 46–47.

Here we have clearly pointed out to us the obligation under which every Israelite lies to acquire a sufficient knowledge, be it much or be it little, of the laws of our God. Further, it is also made a duty to teach the same to our children, that they also may learn to observe to do accordingly. For the reason given, that it is not a matter of indifference, one to which we might attend or not, as our fancy or inclination might dictate; but to which we should resort, as the patient snatches with eagerness after the medicinal draught which, he believes, has the power to stay the outstretched arm of death. Aye, and does the sufferer eagerly follow the advice of the fallible earthly physician, whose well-intended medicaments may after all slay in place of reviving: how much more should we hasten to receive with eagerness the fruit of life, the certain remedy for our fainting soul, which the infallible Physician so graciously offers and so beneficially bestows!—This is the herb of life, this is the healing balsam which must restore life into decay, which must, to use simple language, restore peace into the mind where even sin and excesses may for a time have caused peace and contentment to fly.—Let it then be our study to learn our duties, and let us also bestow upon our children what we have found to be so beneficial in prosperity, and so healing amidst tribulations. Then, indeed, may parents rejoice in the number

of their offspring, when they behold them all the children of righteousness, true and faithful servants of the Most High. Then, indeed, may the female rejoice in her beauty and loveliness, when she is armed against the snares and temptations of life. Then can we hail our mothers as our benefactors, our fathers as spiritual progenitors, our sisters as our best friends, our wives as faithful companions, and our daughters as springs of hope for the future.—The brother too may not then mistrust the brother, nor will the son rebel against the father, and the husband will be the protector of his wife, and the guardian of her innocence and honour. Is this the legitimate effect of a religious education? It is! May it then be the will of Heaven to make it prosper among us, that all may be true to our Maker, and faithful to our God!

O our Father! another festival again has sped along to cause us to rejoice in thy goodness, and to bring us to pray in thy holy house. Many are the evils, Thou knowest it, O Lord! under which we labour! In thy indignation, in thy just wrath, because of our transgressions, Thou didst call unto the invader, who levelled our sanctuary to the ground. Wanderers now we are upon the face of thy earth, neither temple to journey thereunto, nor priest have we to make atonement for us. O be Thou then our sanctuary, be Thou our priest, and receive our offered prayers instead of the incense and sacrifice. Enlighten too our minds, that we may behold wonders out of thy law, which Thou didst proclaim unto our parents on this day of Pentecost, the recurrence of which we now celebrate. And may it be further thy will to preserve us entire in our captivity, and bless those means which thy servants take to cause the spread of a knowledge of Thee. And do Thou display over us thy mighty arm, and let it be thy will that all nations may be brought to see thy glory, and join themselves unto those whom Thou didst call thy people, and thy first-born, and thy treasure.—O grant us life, and grant us prosperity, and hasten the approach of thy anointed, whom Thou hast promised to redeem us from captivity.—May this be thy will! Amen.

Sivan 5th. }  
June 2d. } 5595.

## DISCOURSE XL.

## THE TRANSGRESSION OF ISRAEL.

LORD of the universe, listen to our prayer when we call on Thee, and grant us the favour of thy countenance on the day on which we approach to seek thy protection ! And O, cast us not off entirely from before Thee, although we have transgressed, we and our fathers ! And if we have sinned as mortals, if we have lost sight of thy holy ways as erring sons of the earth : do Thou extend thy forgiveness as it becometh thy greatness and holiness ; for we know Thee as a God who pardonest iniquities, and who long withholdest thy anger, and pourest not forth thy wrath over the sinful and wayward child ! — May this be thy will, and mayest Thou ever spare us according to thy infinite mercy ! Amen.

## BRETHREN !

Not only in this age in which our lot is cast, but also in days gone by men have been ever prone to follow the path of evil, and have foolishly forsaken the law of righteousness to gratify their sinful inclinations. And although it must be acknowledged that at some periods wickedness does more extensively prevail than at others : still it may be maintained, that mankind are ever the same with but trifling differences. We therefore occasionally witness an entire generation almost leading a life displeasing to Heaven ; and then again when punishment is sent, they turn and seek the Lord, and forsake the evil of their ways. The philanthropist and the adorer of his God, need therefore never despair of a regeneration of their fellow beings ; for even though all appear to be sinning, there always will be those who will never swerve from the service of the Creator, through whom the others will again be led to a knowledge of the way of truth. But also universal virtue has at no time prevailed ; and after centuries of adherence to religion, the march of wickedness has often marred the beautiful structure of holiness and spread desolation over the fields, towns and temples upheld



only by virtue, piety and devotion. All this has been abundantly verified by the history of our people. There had been times, during the continuance of the Hebrew commonwealth, when virtue was loved, when the law of God was honoured, and when the throng of worshippers crowded the temple at Jerusalem. But through the folly of rulers and people a change had come by degrees over the fair scene; and in place of virtue, murder and incest were committed; in place of the law of God, heathen rites were honoured; and instead of crowds at Jerusalem, the temples of the numberless idols of Judah received the thoughtless multitude. Thus was the people circumstanced, which had once been chosen as a peculiar treasure of righteousness and sanctity, and thus far had the Israelites sunk from their high estate. But still they vainly imagined themselves free from guilt, and they did not in their obduracy look upon their mischievous conduct as blameable. At such doings the indignation of God was kindled, and He resolved to let the punishment denounced take its natural course, that it might be accomplished what had been foretold, that the Israelites should be cast out from their delightful land, if they at any time were to disobey those precepts, through the observance of which alone they could lay claim to the lovely inheritance. Now, though the conditions had been clearly proposed, and there could be no possible doubt as to their meaning and bearing: still the merciful One delayed his just indignation, and sent his servants the prophets to warn the apostate race of the danger they were voluntarily incurring by the course they were pursuing. Our people had in former times seen and felt how great was the difference between following the will of God and disobedience to his precepts. Moreover they had before them the holy law which denounced awful visitation as a natural consequence of leaving the path of right. Still, as the threat: "And you shall be speedily lost from off the good land which the Lord gives to you," had remained hitherto unfulfilled, although they defiled their lovely country by their abominations and their idolatry: our ancestors possibly imagined, that the other punishments, short of this, were events, in the ordinary course of nature, to which all nations, whether Israelites or not, are alike subject. But they heeded not, that in all occur-

rences of life it is the superintending Providence that rules, and that nothing, even if it be only a daily adventure, is sent without a high object from the Source of all. They thus continued to sin, till even the house of God witnessed in its sacred precincts the murder of the priest and the prophet—as though the evil day would never reach them. O blind delusion! O short-sighted sinfulness! does the Almighty not see, because his arrows do not fly instantaneously? does the Judge of all slumber, because sudden destruction overtakes not the transgressor? and cannot the Omnipotent repay iniquity to its perpetrator, solely because He mercifully delays the punishment?—Most truly, O, our God, have we experienced, that although Thou art slow of anger, thy punishment strikes home, and thy arrows sink deep into the sinful heart, and that thy vengeance is only retarded, not withheld. Yet, though so great were our misdeeds, our heavenly Father let the merited retribution take place by degrees: first, a part of the kingdom of Israel was overrun by one Assyrian king, and then the remainder were led away by his successor. In this manner was fulfilled in part the denunciations of Moses, which had been confirmed by a constant succession of inspired men, one of whom predicted (1 Kings, xiv. 15): “And the Lord will smite Israel, like the reed bends in the water, and He will expel Israel from off this good land, which He has given to their fathers, and scatter them on the other side of the river, because they have made their idol-groves, incensing the Lord.” Although the curse had been thus partially fulfilled, the men of Judah, it is possible, did not altogether grieve for the downfall of the rival kingdom, with which they had waged many bitter and bloody wars. Perhaps also they fancied themselves secure, because they had within their boundaries the holy temple which God had chosen as the residence of his holy name. Perhaps too they did not conceive their transgressions to be quite so heinous as those of the Israelites, because they had occasionally repented, which the latter had never done. Thus they lulled themselves into a fatal security, and the amount of their iniquities was fearfully swelled, till they too were ripening fast for destruction.—Again the spirit was poured forth, and men arose who yet shake the world by their fervour and eloquence. They went out with the word of life on their lips,

and whilst announcing the impending evil, they intreated their brothers to avert it by a speedy return to righteousness.—But they addressed deaf ears, their words fell like seed upon an unfruitful soil, upon unwilling hearts ; and it therefore occurred which had been so long foretold, and down fell the glory of our nation, the crown of our head was hurled to the ground, and the bright gems were dimmed, and the pure gold was tarnished;—our temple was burned, our holy city rendered the abode of the wild beasts of the desert, and our nation scattered to the four corners of heaven, so that years rolled over our devastated land, during which not the foot of man nor of cattle trod its desolate soil.—Long is the time since this calamity befel us, centuries have sped along in their unceasing course, and nations have sprung up and nations have passed away: and nevertheless we are yet left to mourn for the bereavement we then suffered, for never have we again risen to our pristine greatness; and though undestroyed, because indestructable, our glory and our power have at no time since attained any considerable eminence. Still we are the same that we have been in old times, the descendants of the same illustrious race, and the inheritance of the most favoured and most pious and most devoted of men is yet in our possession; for the books of the holy inspirations, which tell us of the outpourings of the spirit which God graciously revealed to Adam's sinful progeny, have not perished amidst the troubles and afflictions which befel us. As has been said already, the Israelites fancied that they were secured from the evils which had been predicted, and consequently the banishment which had overtaken one portion of the people was not regarded as a warning by the other, and they therefore sinned, as though the dreaded future would never arrive. But all the while their evil day was drawing nigh, and the enemies of our race were already buckling on their armour for the deadly conflict against the far-famed Jerusalem. And this period so pregnant with wo was chosen by God to send another of those devoted messengers, who, among the prophets that had been deputed, was one of the greatest, and one that was indeed the man of sorrow ; who, during his mission, and after the event had so dreadfully verified the truth of the words he had spoken, suffered many and

various mishaps, in the persecutions he encountered, and the evils he witnessed as befalling his beloved nation, the holy city, and the sacred temple. This man was Jeremiah, and he was told to go and to warn the people of the impending storm, that by repentance they might haply escape its outbreak. In the opening of the book of his prophecies we are presented with a succinct account of his appointment to the sacred calling of prophet, to which dignity he was raised whilst yet very young. He at first hesitated to accept the holy trust, but he was told : "Not to say : I am young, for to whithersoever I send thee thou shalt go, and whichsoever I command thee thou shalt speak; be not afraid of them, for I am with thee to save thee, says the Lord." From this we are to learn, that it matters not what age the teacher may be, but, however young or otherwise unimportant, the word of salvation must be received with becoming deference from his mouth; for it is not the man nor his glorification which is the object in view, but the end is the spread of righteousness, and the effect is the sanctification of the Creator of the universe, and this can be attained by the instrumentality of any one whom He, who thrones above, may select in his wisdom.—Jeremiah no longer refused to go forth, and, accepting the trust together with its dangers (for then, as now, the admonisher of the people on account of their wrongs and backslidings was not beloved) he received his mission by, to adopt the figurative language of Scripture, a touch from the Supreme Hand on his lips, or, in other words, by the infusion in him of an accession of wisdom, of knowledge, and of a higher moral courage; and the Lord said to him "Behold, I have given my words in thy mouth." Next in order follow several visions which Jeremiah saw, which as prophet he had to tell as a part of his mission to the people, and were intended to impress on their minds the intention of God to cause the threatened evil soon to come over them. They had thought themselves safe; but now it was announced that the evil was hastening to overwhelm them. God also showed to Jeremiah the northern hordes, who would sweep over the plains and mountains and bring destruction even to the gates of Jerusalem itself—Jerusalem which then was thought too strong and too impregnable to fear the approach even of the foeman.—Having announced to

the people what punishment was in store for them, he tells them, how much satisfaction God had received from their former love, when they went after Him confidently, like the youthful bride follows the chosen of her heart, unto the desert, to receive there the confirmation of the holy espousals—the law which was proclaimed from Sinai.—But now, continues the prophet, speaking in the name and the person of the Deity: “Hear ye the word of the Lord, house of Jacob, and all ye families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord, what evil have your ancestors found in me, that they have distanced themselves from me, and that they went after vanities and became vain?” Here we have the folly and wickedness of the transgressors among our people placed in a strong light before us. First, we are told how much was regarded the filial devotion, and how everlastingly would be remembered the submission to God’s guidance. But now look upon the contrast: the very nation that had obtained Heaven’s favour in so singular a manner, is the very one that forsakes Him without any cause; the very one that seeketh vanity, where the opposite reality is so great, so palpable, so powerful, so wise, so good! Could they allege, that God was not so great as formerly? or does perhaps the sinner of our own day imagine, that the power of the Lord is lessened? when they must have known, and when we daily experience, that He is ever the same, and that his is the everlasting majesty! Could they aver, that the Lord spoke no more from Sinai? or will the transgressors of our time say, that the divine legislation has not been renewed before their own eyes? can this be an excuse for trespassing and sin?—But are not the effects of divine omnipotence daily manifested around us? is perhaps the light of the sun ever in aught diminished? do the stars now shine with less than their wonted splendour? is the blue of heaven less intense and less beautiful? does not the nourishing earth still yield her manifold productions? do not the seasons roll on thus far in unending, unchanging, and unvarying succession?—And say! are not the wonders of revelation the same they were on the first day of their announcement? can, therefore, any one seriously say, that God is less manifest now than formerly?—And say you his power is lessened? when it is nowise diminished by age and care, when in Him succeeding

ages have not discovered aught of decay, of uncertainty of purpose, of a lack of energy; when all with Him is as from the beginning, when He is unending in power and unlimited in might!—And He who is old of days and unchanging in purpose is no less wise than powerful, and since his acting vigour is unimpaired, the knowledge which is his, the wisdom which is himself, is also left unchanged; and doubt you it, when you see that daily new wisdom is brought to light? and say you, it is the inventive faculty of man which produces these wonders! but whence does wisdom come to man? say, who is it that causes his mind to swell with intelligence, unless it be He, who teaches man understanding?—Sinners, perhaps say, God is no longer so kind as formerly He was wont to be; He beheld the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt, and He saved them; but where now are his mercies of which our fathers have spoken? But consider a moment and reflect what blessings we, though unworthy, daily receive, and we will cease to complain; true, we linger in captivity, as also did a portion of Israel at the time of Jeremiah; but then are not our sins and our ancestors' sins the division between our God and ourselves? where is the repentance, the return to righteousness, which has been asked at our hands? when did we ever return to the Lord in sincerity and truth?—Oh no, He is always the same, ever great, ever manifest, ever powerful, ever wise, ever good; but we do as the prophet says: “And when I brought you into the land of Carmel to eat of the fruits and good products, you came and made unclean my land, and my inheritance ye rendered an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the Lord; those that laid hold of the law did not know me; the shepherds rebelled against me; and the prophets prophesied by Baal; and after that which cannot help they went.” Is this not true, aye, even to this very day, of many of us, I fear to say, of most of us? is there not, therefore, cause enough for the anger of God which was once poured out to continue its action on us, or as the Bible says: “Therefore, yet will I strive with you, says the Lord, and with the children of your children will I strive?” Yes, we alone are the cause that God's favour is not bestowed on us, we are indeed the obstinate, obdurate generation, whose eyes are blinded to the effects of our misdeeds; we

sin, and then arraign the Supreme's goodness for applying the merited chastisement.—And if this was true in Jeremiah's time, it is not the less so at this very hour. How little regard is paid to the dictates of the law! every one, alas! forms a code for himself, he does, as it were, set up an idol of his own, to which he pays his homage. One worships his money, and to it he sacrifices the eternal repose of his neglected soul. To him no Sabbath bids the weekly rest to come; to him no holidays of the Lord are days of rejoicing; the season of atonement for sins is to him like all others, a season for the pursuit of vile lucre; and often honesty and probity are made cloaks, only assumed to hide his turpitude which the laws of the land would signally punish, if his real acts were discovered. Another is a sensualist, and what are to him the precepts which inculcate holiness and chastity? even into the house of God he goes benumbed by the intoxicating drink which he loves; even in midnight hours he seeks to gratify his lust, and for the sake of pleasing his palate he will devour whatever the law of God has interdicted to us.—Again, one is ambitious of rising to distinction in a world which loves not Israel and their institutions; at least he fancies so; and behold his twisting and turning to assimilate himself to the world at large; see what pains he takes to convince others, perhaps himself, that the name of Jew is hateful to him; see how eagerly he catches at the small favours which the gentiles are graciously pleased to give to him, like the thankful dog that licks his master's hand for a useless bone or a wasted crum, thrown into his expectant, hungry mouth: and straightway this would-be-great one withholds circumcision from his sons; induces his daughters, under foreign guidance, into the mysteries of a divided deity; he proclaims his regret that he was born a Jew, if his birth is known, and if not, he carefully conceals his origin, and at length, to use again the Scripture words: "And they mingled among the nations and they learned of their ways;" or he, perhaps, altogether forsakes the hopes of his infancy and the trust of his maturer years, and he renounces, O horrible thought! his hopes in heaven and his belief in the all-wise, true and only ONE God and everlasting Creator, and he sells his soul to damnation, and his name for a curse and a by-word for the purpose

of obtaining worldly fame, for a renown which when obtained is not worth the possession, and may prove a burden and a hindrance to him, even before his days are closed on earth!—And, says the prophet concerning conduct similar to that just exhibited :

שמו שמים על זאת ושערו חרבו מאד נאם ה' : כי שתיים  
 רעות עשה עמי אתי עזבו מקור מים חיים לחצב להם  
 בארת בארת נשברים אשר לא יכילו המים : ירמ' ב' יב'—יג' :

“Be astounded at this ye heavens, and shudder! they are very much corrupted, says the Lord. For two evils my people have done; me they have forsaken, the spring of living waters, to hew themselves cisterns, cisterns that are broken, which cannot hold the water.” Jeremiah, ii. 12-13.

This was spoken but a short time, not fifty years, before the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The people indeed had become very corrupt; gross idolatry was the disgrace of our people; on every hill, under every green tree idols were seen, to which they senselessly offered adoration; but though their folly was proved to them, they still continued to defile themselves, nothing heeding the voice which so feelingly called to them to consider the folly of their way, in “saying to the wood, thou art my father, and to the stone, thou hast born us.” But, alas! the messengers of God remained unheeded, their advice was listened to only to be contemned; for at that time already there were not wanting those who looked upon the really wise, the servants of God, as fanatics and bigots. But at length the evil, the advent of which was not believed, came and swept away wall and temple, city and people, priests and judges; and then was seen the slaughter of the mother upon her babes, and of the father upon his children, and together lay slain the teacher with his scholars, and the bride and the bridegroom; and there arose the shouts of assailants and the groans of the vanquished, and in the prostrate ruins of God’s house were heard the hated voice of the triumph of the adversary, as he strode conquering and rejoicing over the desolation which his arms had been permitted to achieve.—Hah! dreadful indeed was that day, when the glory of Israel sunk, when the



sun of our prosperity set in a sea of blood.—True, the temple was once more rebuilt, and again a remnant was permitted to reoccupy the sacred soil; but a second time also, the terrible scenes were re-enacted with more heightened effect, and the slaughter was ten-fold increased under the command of the Roman Vespasian and his son Titus, since when we have been wanderers, and an easy and ready prey to any one who chose to persecute us.—All this was caused by our sins, because we would not listen to the warning voice of instruction, which would fain have arrested our steps on the road of ruin. Our ancestors, however, were obdurate, and our present state is an evidence of their folly and wickedness.

It is now the period in which the calamitous subversion of our state twice occurred; O let it act as a wholesome check to our own obduracy, and let us reflect, that we too are sinning, and hewing out for ourselves cisterns which will not hold the living waters. Aye, heap up wealth in masses, avaricious one; still thou hast not laid up imperishable treasures; thy cistern is a broken cistern, and not a drop of the water of life will remain in it, unless the breach is healed by a recourse to the holy law. Sensual one, weenest thou that thy tasting of all pleasures will avail thee aught at the final day of judgment? sinful man! no, thy birthright thou hast sold for a mess of pottage; and when thy doom is sealed thou wilt thyself acknowledge, that thy cistern has been a broken one, and that it held not the living waters!—And thou too, man of ambition, of worldly vain glory, seest thou not that thy worship was the worship of a false delusive idol? worldly honour thou didst crave, and thou didst not hesitate in thereby offending Him who has given thee life and wisdom. Go meet, then, thy doom, and teach by thy example and misery, that those who forsake the Lord and his law have hewn themselves broken cisterns which hold not the living waters.—Brethren! seed of Jacob! children of Israel! open your hearts to the instruction which God has vouchsafed to you; and O let it be your endeavour to deserve, by serving Him in truth, a return of his favour; and feel and know, that only through obedience can we Israelites be happy, and only through adherence to the law can we deserve God's kindness and protection.

O Thou, who art ever the Guardian of Israel, shield us by thy protecting wings, and watch over us lest the nations swallow us up in their wrath. We know that we have sinned, but do Thou, O merciful God, prove to us thy superabundant kindness, and judge us not according to our misdeeds, but according to thy mercy which is unending. And may it be thy will to revisit our captivity, and number us like the shepherd numbers his flock, that not one of them may escape his tender care, and lift up thy hand a second time to restore the remnant of the flock which has escaped to thy holy mountain, there to worship Thee for ever. Amen!

Tamuz 26th. }  
 July 23d. } 5595.

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## DISCOURSE XLI.

### THE INSTITUTION OF PRAYER.

O OUR GOD and Father hearken to our prayers and listen to the supplications which we pour out before Thee. And O grant us thy forgiveness on that fearful day which Thou hast appointed as the time of judgment for thy creatures; and when Thou sittest our deeds and probest our transgressions, mayest Thou say: "I will redeem them from going to destruction, I have found a redemption." May this be thy will. Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

The season has again arrived when the descendants of Israel, who have but a spark of the holy fire left unquenched within their bosoms, will hasten to the house of prayer to offer up their devotion to their God. And sweet indeed is the incense thus sacrificed on the altars of our Father, and truly grateful in the Supreme Presence is the odour of such offerings; for the humble

outpourings of the heart that knows its weakness will never be despised by the Disposer of human destinies. But prayer to be acceptable, to be a truly agreeable offering, should be prompted by holy feelings, and be based upon a knowledge of our unworthiness and the acknowledgment of the evil of our ways. Many a one may enter these walls, many a one may utter his orisons, but his heart may be far away, wandering after his worldly pursuits, and whilst his lips are praying, his thoughts may be engaged in speculating on objects of pecuniary gain and interested in matters far from appertaining to the worship of God. Many persons praying, or rather assembling under such disadvantageous and ungodly circumstances, there actually are, and it is therefore necessary that we should endeavour to find out the proper feelings which ought to accompany us to the house of God. To come to a correct understanding on this point, we must consider: first, to *whom* we pray; secondly, for *what cause* we pray, and lastly, what is to be *effected* by our prayers.

Well has one of our wise men said: דע לפני מי אתה עומד  
 “Know before whom thou art standing.” In this simple sentence we are reminded, that our Heárer is not an ignorant man who understands not our words, who knows not our wants; not a wise man who may be deceived by our superior cunning, or circumvented by our appearance; not even a mighty potentate who may not be able by the insufficiency of his power to grant all our requests: but it is our God, who fully comprehends our words, and is acquainted with our wants, aye, even before our lips give utterance to them; He is also wise, it is beyond our cunning to deceive Him, and no assumed appearance, however ingeniously contrived, can impose on his credulity, for to Him who is all-seeing the inmost recesses of thought are laid open, and He knows the secret motives of the most mysterious action perpetrated in the darkest corner, the farthest removed from all human ken; and at last his power is unbounded, and we need not fear in Him any inadequacy or inability to comply with our demands, if they are consonant with our ultimate good; and as his power is unlimited by time or circumstances, we need not fear that our prayer has not been answered, because our request is not immediately granted, for since God is not less good than wise and powerful, we should consider that our petition may be

granted at a period remote from the present, when it may redound more to our advantage and the repose of our soul. If now we come to pay our adorations, it is obviously our first duty to remove all deceit and duplicity from our heart; to endeavour to be fully impressed with the conviction, that nothing but undivided sincerity will avail us, since by no possibility can we hope to deceive. Secondly, to come with humble confidence with our Father, and not be deterred by the magnitude of our wants, nor by the unworthiness of ourselves, from laying our desires open to Him. And lastly, to wait with becoming hope and resignation the fulfilment of our petition, not to be depressed at finding ourselves rejected for a brief space; nor to be elated with pride when we witness the accomplishment of our wishes; nor may we be looking upon ourselves as righteous beyond our neighbours, because our prayer has been answered. But we should consider that if our wishes are *not* done, that perhaps we in our ignorance have desired that which, if granted, would be hurtful to us, and that perhaps our previous sins have deprived us of the asked advantage. In either of these cases, we should endeavour to amend our course and watch our own feelings narrowly to seek out the error which will at length, upon an honest investigation, be discovered in ourselves. In case, however, that our petition is granted, it would be ridiculous in the extreme, if, because God has been kind and merciful to us, we should therefore wax proud in our hearts and look upon others with contempt; since this indeed would at once prove that we are absolutely unworthy of the favour of God; for, if we fairly examine our course of life, and reflect how often we have vexed God by our sinfulness, and how often we have been remiss or lukewarm in the practice of the righteousness demanded at our hands: we will surely have no cause to elevate ourselves above our neighbours, who, if even acknowledgedly more wicked than we, may not have had the opportunities for improvement nor the benefits of a holy example which to enjoy may have been our happy lot.

Whenever then we go to pour out our heart in prayer, it should be done with a sincere confidence on the unlimited bounty of God, and with a firm reliance that whatever He may vouchsafe to decree *that* alone is the best and most conducive

to our own welfare and the happiness of others. And in this spirit our wise men relate, that the high priest during his annual officiating in the holy of holies prayed, that "the petition of wayfarers may not be listened to, to stay the blessing of the descending rain when the world is in need thereof," for to grant the request of such an individual thus praying would be to the detriment and injury of the many. It is therefore not acting in the spirit of becoming deference, if the petitioner comes to the throne of Grace with a long recital of his own merits ; for let a man observe ever so many Sabbaths, let his charity be ever so unbounded, let his philanthropy indeed cheer up the countenance of all that suffer : still all these virtues and many others superadded cannot, should not, make an erring mortal think, that now his claims to divine grace are established on so firm a footing, that he may ask in a tone of authority or appeal with a confidence of assured success. If one prays in such a spirit of arrogance, he deserves not that He that answereth prayers should vouchsafe to him his request, since the first requisite towards obtaining grace, humility and devotion, are supplanted by pride and arrogance. And in this, as in many other points, we have a beautiful example of piety set us by our great teacher, who was indeed the shining light and the guiding star sent to lead a newly redeemed people to a happiness which should not be merely temporal and confined to one spot, but lasting and universal ; and thus though the land of Palestine, our temporal inheritance, has been rendered desolate, though Jerusalem our holy city is now surrounded with wastes and ruins : yet the law is not wrested from us, and the examples of holiness and piety it contains flow indeed into our souls to refresh and invigorate them, like the meadow stream which meanders along through grassy banks and shady groves, fertilizing the soil in its course, which otherwise would be barren and dreary. In Moses's own family there was affliction ; his brother and sister, they who had been associated with him in the holy work of redeeming their fellow-believers, had sinned against him their brother and teacher, and God, incensed at their misconduct, and ever acting up to that great principle, that the greater the piety of an individual the more strictly will also be the retribution, punished Miriam

with leprosy, that loathsome disease, which caused the infected to be removed out of the community of Israel and compelled them to live in solitude. Seeing his sister's affliction, Moses did not remind God of the many acts of devotion, not of the many good works wrought by him; but he called simply in the most humble and confiding manner on the Healer of the sick to grant her relief, saying: "O God, I pray thee, do thou heal her." You will observe, brethren, that these few words, including every thing which was needed, presented without parade or ostentation, were graciously received, and the leper was healed after a probation of seven days had elapsed. An example from so high a source should not be without its effect upon us, and as Moses did, so should we also do; in whatever trouble and sorrow we may be plunged, whatever joy may elevate our hearts, we should resort in all humility, free from pride and arrogance, either to lay our wants in sincerity before God, or to offer Him our thanks with heartfelt gratitude. And if we come in this manner, as children that come before their father, we need not tremble at the immeasurable distance which divides us from the Most High; we need not then be struck with fear, because we are sinful and He is great; but we may be comforted with the assurance that our offering will be received and our supplication listened to with favour, for He the Ruler and Preserver of all things feels for, and cares for, all his creatures, from the greatest to the lowest.

Next let us consider the second question proposed: "For what cause shall we pray?" It must be evident to every one gifted with common sense, that there are many circumstances and occurrences in life, where all human agency is incapable of rendering us the least service. There are moments, when the heart is full to overflowing with joy or with sorrow, when we are in danger, either of being corrupted by pride or of sinking into the slough of despair. Aye, there are seasons, when we would shun to confide to any human ear what lays heavily on our mind, when we are disgusted, satiated with things of evanescent life, when we are wearied with the same dull round of care and labour which constantly oppresses us, and when the sight of a fellow-mortal becomes almost loathing, and when the words of encouragement, of censure, or of praise will fall

on our ears like the rattling of the bones of some suspended malefactor, hateful beyond endurance. Again there are times, when we are forsaken by all the world, when for foul suspicion we are cast into a dungeon, exposed to a public trial, condemned to an ignominious punishment, and left to pine in solitude, vainly recurring to our former life, and regretting too late that we gave way to temptations, when an opposite course might have given us comfort and prosperity.—The child too may follow to the tomb the remains of his last beloved parent; the father may weep over the early bier of his only offspring, and the husband may mourn over the grave of the dearly-beloved and early-called wife of his bosom: who is there that can speak consolation to them—what on earth is there to bid their hearts rejoice, they, to whom all around is gloom and despair? And even heap riches up for either: and the son will tell you that yonder grave hides the guide of his youth, the friend of his infancy, and the author of his existence. And the father's only hope, the stay of his old age, is closed up in the cold earth, and he heeds not the world's greatness because *he* is no more!—The husband has lost her, who was to him dearer than life, the mother of his children, the partner of his joys and of his sorrows, her, with whom he vainly hoped to pass down the vale of life in harmony and concert; and her, the life of his life, death has snatched from him in the bloom of youth and usefulness.—In all such instances it should be our duty to resort to prayer, either to unburthen ourselves of the load which oppresses us in the presence of Him, who can alone remove the weight, or to give vent to our surcharged feelings and ask consolation and assistance of the Lord of consolations and the Saviour of mankind.—When the measure of thy joy has suddenly become filled to excess, when thy giddy brain refuses to bear with meekness the exuberance of the blessings received, O mortal man: hie thee to the house of God, and sacrifice there to Him thy thanks, and humble thyself at his feet, and reflect that He who gave thee joy can take away again the gift He has bestowed; and thou wilt return to thy dwelling with the peace of God within thee, filled with humility and lowliness anent thy perishable greatness, and imbued with love and kindness towards all, who like thee are inhabitants of the

mortal clayey dwellings.—If thou art wearied with the cares of life, if the burden of existence has become too heavy for thee: seek again relief from thy God. Reflect that it is thy appointed lot to earn thy bread with the sweat of thy face, and that thy lot is not heavier than that of others since no one, however exalted, is free from care and sorrow. And if this reflection fails to give thee comfort, then forget all thy dissatisfaction and lay open thy heart to thy Maker, ask of Him for strength and support: and surely thy prayer will be answered, and thy toil will be lightened, and thy burden will be eased; and thou wilt again mix with the cheerful groups of associates, and smile with the smiling, shed a tear of sympathy with the afflicted, feel a new interest in life, and gladly do those duties which the station assigned to thee may demand at thy hands. Away then will fly the spirit of despondency, and the gloom of despair will vanish; and the fields will smile again in verdure clad, the blithsome song of the feathered minstrels will again sound sweet, the flowers will again send forth their odours; and reconciled to thyself and nature, thou wilt thank God, who has through darkness led thee to feel the more strongly his love and power.

Thou! who languishest in captivity, imagine not that thy hope has fled for ever. No—sinner though thou art, forsaken though thou deemest thyself, though a prison holds thy fettered limbs: there is One above that watches, that cares for thee. “He sleepeth not,” says the holy singer, “the guardian of Israel,” and He who so bounteously cares for all his creatures has not forgotten thee, the captive and forlorn. O lift but thy obdurate heart to Him! O cease but thy vain repining; let but a holy hope invigorate thy heart: and instantaneously will enlargement come to thee even in thy captivity; and the sunbeam which lights up thy narrow cell will teach thee, that the light of heaven is not yet quenched, that the goodness of the Creator is not ended, although thou for thy crimes art doomed to suffer. If thus thou thinkest, thy captivity will be a blessing to thee; since it has rescued thee from the grasp of sin, and united thee again to thy God and Lord.—And if thou art suffering innocently, if thou languishest for the glorification of the holy Name, if heathens in their triumph



punish thee, because thou refuseth to join their unhallowed rites: then surely thou mayest feel comfort in the knowledge that the God for whose laws' sake thou sufferest, will number thy tears, so that not one of them shall be forgotten, and He will treasure them up in his receptacle, and will cleanse thy soul, and purify thy heart, till thou at the end of days wilt shine forth among the righteous ones, with the effulgence of the stars for ever more.

And thou son! who mournest for thy father—parent! who complainest because thy only one is taken—husband! who bewailest a beloved wife, all ye come hither to the temple of our heavenly Father. Ye lament the loss of earthly friends, friends deservedly dear, deservedly valued; but reflect who it is that decreed their doom! From our constitution, our bodies must be given to decay, our flesh must again be changed to the dust; “for dust we are and to dust we must return.” Can we ward off the shafts which are constantly flying? Is there not a period set to our days? What matters it then, whether a few brief years more or less have been assigned to us, provided we do our duty as men, and endeavour to deserve the favour of our Maker? Since, therefore, death is inevitable, it is necessary that friends must always be prepared to meet with becoming resignation the day when their connection must be severed for a period, a period I say, for a reunion must take place before many years have completed their course. Instead therefore of lamentations carried to a sinful excess, ye should reflect that God took away your relatives, because their task was done; and only hope that they now enjoy rest and happiness in the presence of their Maker. And in place of repining, pray fervently that strength may be given you that you also may live in piety and holiness, so that when your course too is ended, you also may meet in yonder life with that beatitude which, it is to be hoped, God has already decreed to those who were so dear to you. If you act and pray thus, you will be resigned to the decrees of Him, all whose ways are just, and you will cease to complain of your hard fate, which is at best but the common portion of humanity.—In short, upon every occasion, where we may require heavenly counsel or heavenly assistance we should resort to prayer, and express fearlessly, with a sincere outpour-

ing of the spirit, whatever we stand in need of. This also we are taught in the first book of Kings, viii. 38—40:

כל תפלה כל תחנה אשר תהיה לכל האדם לכל עמך  
 ישראל אשר ידעון איש נגע לבבו ופרש כפיו אל הבית  
 הזה : ואתה תשמע השמים מכון שבתך וסלחת ועשית  
 ונתת לאיש ככל דרכיו אשר תדע את לבבו כי אתה ידעת  
 לברך את לבב כל בני האדם : למען יראוך כל הימים  
 אשר הם חיים על פני הארמה אשר נתתה לאבותינו :  
 מלכים א' ח' לח'-מ' :

“ Every prayer and every supplication which any man may make, of all thy people Israel, who may know each the affliction of his heart, and spread out his hands to this house ; and do Thou hear in heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do to each man according to his ways, in as much as Thou knowest his heart, for Thou alone knowest the heart of all the children of man. That they may fear Thee all the days which they live upon the land, which Thou hast given to our fathers.”

In this beautiful extract from the fervid prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple we have a brief elucidation of the whole object and scope of prayer ; for here he lays down with the utmost precision, that every man, no matter how heavy his guilt or affliction may be, provided the heart be sincere, should come and prostrate himself before God, spread out his hands as it were towards the temple, and ask for whatever his case demands from Him who promised to let his glory dwell among us. And even to this day “ it is to the East that the Hebrew bends,” it is in the direction of that holy temple from which our sins have caused us to wander, that we direct our face during our prayers, and in this manner we contribute to keep alive the sacred flame within our bosom which, yet burns with a yearning towards those hallowed fields and those venerated shrines from which we have been driven. Let it then be our endeavour to call for assistance on Him who is able to assist us amidst every danger and to rescue us from all tribulations. And every morning too, and when the sun is bending his face towards the west, and every evening when the glorious light of day has set, and every night before we seek our couch,

let us pour out our orisons to our heavenly Father, and let us at every hour, at every period of our life, constantly thank Him for the many favours He has so graciously bestowed.

The third part of our subject: "What is to be effected by our prayers?" now demands our consideration.—Persons may ask: "What needs God our prayers, when He is assuredly acquainted with our wants before we express them in words!" No one more cheerfully acknowledges God's all pervading omniscience than we do; still it must be admitted that prayer is necessary, not (as may be erroneously supposed) to inform God, but to impress on our *own* mind our dependance, yes our entire dependance for every comfort and blessing we enjoy. Worldly men are but too apt to think much of their own power, as it were their strong arm is enough for them, and they accordingly never or but rarely pray, for in effect they think themselves placed beyond the necessity of asking assistance from God; hence too they are proud, vain, selfish and self-sufficient. But suddenly their evil day comes and their riches take unto themselves wings and fly away; the number of their children is diminished by death; their intellect is reduced to madness, and they present a striking example of what man is when God's protection is withdrawn. But the humble and meek, who daily resort to commune with the invisible Power that surrounds all, who express in words the filial confidence they really feel, are truly, and in every sense of the words, removed beyond the chances and changes of life. To them even in misfortunes and sufferings there are peace and enjoyment, and the world may exhaust its malice against them, without disturbing the sacred trust they feel in Heaven. Besides, the Bible does teach us, that God grants the prayers of his adorers. Now, though He is not made more conscious of our wants than He was before we prayed: still we must look upon prayer like upon any other virtuous act, which is to be performed, for the sake of making ourselves worthy of the favour of God.—If we go to pray, for any calamity, or in any tribulation, or in any impending danger, it is obviously necessary that we must look into our own hearts to see if all is right there, and we must examine our conduct both past and present to observe whether or not sin and corruption lurk there as the

parents of evil. In this manner we take God to witness, so to say, that we wish his protection, in lieu of which we prepare ourselves to become his servants more intimately than we have been hitherto. Now, God does not need our words to satisfy Him of our intentions, but we need it ; the heart to feel truly should clothe its thoughts in words, this makes the impression more lasting, it fixes the more strongly the reformation that is once begun ; and who knows but that the Almighty may do according to all that we ask, when He perceives that by preparing ourselves truly for prayer we have changed for the better, and now abhor the evil which we formerly loved ? No wonder need therefore be expressed that the Omniscient has told his people to pray to Him and to call on his holy name ; He asks for a devotional spirit, for pure and elevated thought, and as a reward for such a petition He promises to relent (to use human expressions, since even of the holiest things we must speak as men do) from the intended evil ; not as though He, the unchangeable One, had changed his purpose, but because man has himself rescinded the evil, menaced for his misconduct, by a change of his deeds, and has thus secured a change of fate, a reversion from the curses to the blessings. Just as at the making of the golden calf God did not utterly destroy the Israelites, because Moses prayed, and because there were yet multitudes left who had never swerved from the righteous path, and had remained true when many went astray. O brethren, let this lesson not be lost upon you ; return to the Lord with prayer like the men of Nineveh, and God may revoke the evil, and you may not perish. 'The season of repentance is at hand ! soon will the sound of the shophar announce in all the assemblies of the remnant of Israel that the New Year has arrived, that we have again lived to commence a new season from the creation of the world. How many hours of anguish have passed over our heads in the year that has passed and gone ; how many bitter tears have flowed to the memory of the departed ; how many sighs have been heaved over fortunes lost, over riches foolishly squandered ; how many hours of regret have we purchased ourselves by our forgetfulness of the Lord's behests, commanded to our ancestors ! And shall the season of prayer pass away, and not one of us return to the

bosom of the great Father whom we have fatigued, as the prophet says, by our works? shall all the admonitions have been vouchsafed, and still our hearts remain obdurate? shall the day never come when the sinners will seek again the fold from which they have strayed? Let us hope, at least, for better things, and let us trust that many will come to join the band of brethren who have yet the fear of God in their hearts, and that the number of worshippers may be increased thousand-fold who know before whom they pray, who pray to the Lord in their affliction, and who are drawn closer to Him every time their mouth uttereth the praise of God. Let then all Israel listen with fear to the voice of the cornet when it sounds like the alarum through the land, let it rouse them to exertion for the behalf of their souls; so that, universal piety prevailing, we all may live to behold the banner raised on the mountains, when the glorious Messiah comes to spread good-will and holiness over the surface of all the earth.

Hearer of prayer! to Thee all flesh cometh! O grant Thou our desire, and raise up to us teachers of righteousness in whose mouth thy word may dwell, that they may teach thy people of thy ways. Teach them what they shall say, make them understand what they shall speak, that they may communicate to others of thy children the holy love that burns within them. And grant to all thy adorers, be they wise or foolish, great or humble, thy blessing, and inscribe all within the book of life, when Thou approachest to judge the children of thy hand. Be this thy will, and may the words of our mouth and the thoughts of our hearts, be acceptable before Thee, O our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

Elul 24th. }  
 Sept. 18th. } 5595.

## DISCOURSE XLII.

## CAUSES AND REMEDIES OF SIN.

SOVEREIGN of the universe! to adore Thee, we thy children have assembled to call on Thee, our Father and King. O hear Thou in Heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive our iniquities, as Thou hast pardoned them even from Egypt to this day. And if our sins be crying for punishment, remember Thou then the words Thou hast spoken through thy messenger: "If your sins be like scarlet they shall become white like snow, and if they be red like crimson they shall be like wool." Remember too that we are mortal, prone, and inclined to sin; and if we have given way to temptations, if we have yielded to the unholy impulse of our passions: wipe Thou away the stain of guilt from our souls, and purify us in thy kindness and in mercy; so that we may walk acceptably before Thee and guided by thy wisdom. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

When we look upon one of the outcasts of human society, made outcast by his own folly and crime: we who have not yet sunk so far must wonder, how one, who like us bears the impress of God's image on his countenance, could become so miserably degraded. It is to us incomprehensible, how any one can feel the least joy in wallowing drunk in the mire; how any one, calling himself the father of a family, could stake his last shilling at the gaming table; how the husband could leave his chosen wife, the mother of his children, to riot in the embrace of a wanton; how any one at all imbued with reason, could forswear his God, and doubt in the existence of the Creator. In short, the utter degradation by crime, displayed in all its horrors before us, is a spectacle not alone revolting, but of astonishment also; since with ever so humble an opinion of ourselves, with ever so much charity and indulgence towards

human failings and frailties, we cannot avoid looking upon ourselves with some satisfaction that we are not degraded like those sinners. But whilst we experience this feeling, it should be mingled with thankfulness to God, for having preserved us from temptations, and given us strength to withstand the allurements by which others fell; for though nothing is more established than that every one must make the *beginning* to be good, still it is equally certain, that divine assistance is afforded to whomever makes the beginning, in the words of our sages : הבא לטהר מסייען לו מן השמים “He that comes to purify himself will be assisted from Heaven.” If we view the grievous sinners in this light, our abhorrence for their actions will not be coupled with pride, and their fall will in truth be a warning to us, that we may avoid sinning as they have done. For when we come to look into the history of the persons exhibited above, we must be soon convinced that they were born as virtuously as we have been, with just the same feelings, passions, and propensities, besides which, it is very often the case that their and our education was precisely alike, at least to outward appearances. It may also be taken for granted, I would almost venture to say as an established maxim in morals, that no man becomes suddenly wicked. The question then for us to ponder on is: “How have these men become so lost to all sense of duty?” There are two ways at least in which the mystery can be solved. First, it may be a *defect* in education, which in being of the outward kind may leave the heart unimproved, and expose it thus to be ensnared by the power of sin. Let us suppose an example: There was a man, who in his childhood was instructed in accomplishment, in arts, and in sciences, but the law of God was not impressed on his soul. As a boy he was left to his uncontrolled will, and his inclinations had not the curb of restraint laid on them. His passions showed themselves in petty tyranny over his fellows, but he went unwhipped of the rod of a father’s correction. He next grew up to manhood’s years; but the homage his talents justly received from the world, was by no means calculated to lessen the opinion he entertained of his own importance. His arrogance was even nourished, at seeing others, whom common parlance stigmatized as of inferior birth and meaner grade in

life, endeavouring to outstrip or rival him in the path of pre-ferment. Do you think that he could have been left uncontaminated in moral conduct, whilst his moral feelings had become gradually vitiated? Is it likely that no crime, however secret and well covered, or that no act of disobedience to paternal authority and the divine will had been committed? It would be over charitable to suppose a favourable reply; but even assume that all hitherto had been right within, yet it is certain that an outward morality without a holy conviction, and withal undermined by pride could be no safeguard against temptation. And lo! an offence against his dignity was committed, say one of his friends or himself should have been publicly insulted: and he, unguarded and corrupted in mind, seized the weapon of deadly strife and his guilty hand was imbrued and dyed red in a brother's blood.—You say, perhaps, that one so guilty from such a cause is a mere fiction; alas, no brethren! the examples of dreadful reality are but too common, and many a family now mourns over their blighted hopes brought about by the indulgence of unguarded and unchecked anger, vented in murder and homicide.—Let us take another case, not one for which the angry Judge above would demand: “Where is thy brother,” and condemn one whom accuses the innocent blood crying from the polluted earth; but of an infatuated voluptuary, a devotee to pleasure, who is ruining his health and happiness upon the path he has chosen to tread. Again, let us suppose him to belong to the better classes, a man of education and refinement, endowed with reason of a higher degree, and in possession of wealth and power. Of course all these advantages tend to give him a certain importance in the eyes of society as well as in his own. And should he, the man of refinement, of intellect, of renown, of wealth, and of standing, submit to be controlled by antiquated statutes by which the unlettered peasant is governed? should he belong to the common herd of common-place moral people, who fear God as their fathers have done before them? Not so can our genius act; and behold! he runs riot in his excitements, in his pursuits of novelty and enjoyment, and he falls deeper and deeper into moral debasement, and he grows cloyed with tasting the high seasoned food his appetite has so long craved, and he per-



haps leaves his once loved home, a voluntary exile, and his heart becomes soured to all approaches of humane feelings, and he sinks, a prey to the gnawing of an overloaded conscience and the oppression of a heart destroyed by remorse, into an early and untimely grave, a monument dire of the effects of unregulated passions and desires uncurbed by religion and morality.—In the two instances here exhibited, we have seen how a disregard to the inculcation of sound religious and moral principles in childhood may cause many a noble soul to be lost, by leaving them unguarded against the approach of sin, or rather by removing all defences by which the enemy can be warded off.—It must be apparent that sinning even to degradation in such cases, is a result to be expected, and in place of wondering that so many become lost, it is very remarkable how any one in such circumstances ever escapes the contamination—Besides those of the gifted and higher classes, the uneducated and poor are no less subject, under similar conditions, to enormities only varied in shape, nature, and appearance by the difference of station and opportunity; and in truth our daily experience proves, how much and how awfully responsible parents, particularly of the humbler classes, must be to God for the neglect which they suffer their children to experience in not attending to, and watching over, and curbing the first outbreakings of the evil passions. It were easy to pourtray to you a poor man, who might have been an ornament to his station, become degraded from similar causes, only acting in a different manner, which we have shown to be so pernicious in the wise and wealthy; but it is needless to fatigue your patience by detaining you with a recital of examples which, alas! are so numerous that any one of the least experience must be acquainted with many.

A *second* reason of moral debasement may be found in the carelessness with which we are apt to watch ourselves; and unfortunately from this cause proceeds the ruin of many a noble-mind from whose former course of life, and from whose previous training better results might have been expected. As the world is constituted, we are always surrounded by temptations in a greater or less degree, and in combatting these successfully consists the duty of our life. But how many do fail in

this! how many yield, totter, and stumble! how few are who remain steadfast, undismayed, and unblinded by the manifold allurements! True, no one becomes depraved from yielding to the first temptation; but the road to evil has certainly been trod, and the downward path made more pleasing, at least less abhorrent to the imagination.—Imagine a man that has for years been sober and abstemious in his habits; hitherto his life has been one of ease and comfort, his children have grown up around him in strength and beauty, and he is called among the happy, one of the happiest; but human prosperity is not everlasting; and his evil hour also has arrived; his wealth has become impaired by unfortunate speculations, or some other evil befalls him which to him is grievous to bear; he has heard that wine drowns sorrow, and he resorts to it for relief as a trial; he stupifies his brain into temporary forgetfulness by the enemy he puts into his mouth that robs him of his reason; but anon, he awakes, he feels perhaps degraded at his weakness, and finds his sorrow more agonizing than before; a deeper potation will be the next step, and his inebriety will be of longer duration; till by degrees, seeing his misery increasing, his health waning, he resorts to drink as his sole comforter, imagining that his greatest enemy, the chief promoter perhaps of his sorrow, the consummator of his sufferings, could be the healing balm which his wounded spirit demands: and you at length see him the outcast, wallowing in the mire, a disgrace, a spectacle, a by-word, when he might have been, as he once was, an example of abstinence, of virtue, and of piety! Do I exaggerate?—Alas, no! the annals of degradation speak also of like examples too numerous for the happiness and welfare of society!

Yonder father of a family spends his nights in some obscure quarter of the town, serving the demon of avarice to win other men's substance by the turn of the dice! Horrid spectacle! see the fumes of dissipation rising from every corner of the apartment! behold the tables spread with inviting food, with intoxicating drink! and watch well the countenances of the assembly; see their demoniac looks, their faces distorted by vile passions and hateful avarice, how they watch the event of the game with eager, with expectant gestures; and now the chance has

decided, a fortune has been lost and won, and he, the man who was once happy at his own fireside, is reduced to absolute beggary, and, when he returns home, he cannot give his children bread, when they cry in their hunger. And yet he was not always vicious! In an evil hour he was allured to the fatal spot to become a spectator of the sins of others; he staked a trifle, it mattered not to him whether he lost or won; he won, became excited at play, doubled, trebled his stake, won again, and his brain whirled round at the prospect of so suddenly, and with so little labour, increasing his fortune; another night again witnessed his presence in the sinful assembly, and his renewed rage for gold, for unholy lucre—shall I pursue the gambler farther? no, the picture becomes too disgusting, in short, his sinning is complete—and the last scene we have described! he leaves the house, where he hoped to become wealthy and overloaded with treasure, a houseless beggar, in brief, a ruined gambler!

Another man has walked in the fear of his God from infancy; a virtuous mother early implanted in his bosom the tender seeds of piety; beautiful also were the fruits they bore, and he was known among his associates for his retiring modesty and benevolence; but, in a moment of unguarded confidence, he ventured among those who scoff at Providence and scorn the power of the Most High. He listened to their wild harangues, he was startled by their avowal: "Let us eat, let us drink, let us enjoy our existence whilst we may, for to-morrow we die." They spoke of the delights of sensual enjoyment, of liberty, and of equality—how the rich ought to have no advantages over the poor—how all the produce of industry ought to be equally divided. He was fired at their seeming candour, for their sophistry as yet concealed their ulterior tenets. Anon they went further, they said, that there is no heavenly law—religion has no foundation in fact—morality is a restraint on the inclinations, an abridgement of our personal liberty, an invention of priests and of tyrants, who want to rule the world by keeping them under the restraint of ignorance and superstition. He, who had once admitted that pleasure is an object worth living for, had also to admit the superfluity, the injuriousness of religious restraint. Next, the retribution after death was de-

nounced; and the new convert embraced also the doctrine of everlasting sleep. Thus initiated, what was to him the Creator? no law, according to those pernicious notions, was given; pleasure is the grand object of life; there is no life after death; no reward; no punishment. And at last he heard proclaimed aloud what the fool says in his heart: "There is no God," and the madman grasped at this idea to slay within him the last lurking affection for the religion of his ancestors; and now, he too, like his teachers, scoffed against all that is holy, he bid defiance to the power of Heaven, imagining that the watchful Eye was closed for him, because he denied his existence. What course of crime was now open for him! with adulterers he harboured; with blasphemers he revelled, with murderers he associated, and on the altar of blood-stained liberty he immolated his benefactors, his friends, and his kindred, and exhibited even his father's head as an evidence of his virtue! abused word, when thus applied to dignify horrors and crimes.—But his doings did not last for ever, and a sudden and awful death closed his career, whilst yet uttering his imprecations against the Supreme Judge, aye, on the very day on which he bid defiance, on which he denied his existence, he was made to feel his power, and hurried hence, to answer at that dread tribunal, for his misdeeds, and for the grace abused, and for the law he had forsaken.

Yet another who forsook the path of righteousness had borne in better days the character of an upright man; he was fair in his dealings, and nothing unlawfully obtained was found in his possession. To the widow he was a protector, and a guardian he was to the orphan. But his hour of trial came; the prosperity of his early years was declining, and in his tribulation he called not on God for assistance, he sought not for aid from the merciful One, and he relied on his ingenuity to extricate himself from his difficulties. False shame prevented him from laying his distressed situation open before his friends, his resolution wavered, and he appropriated to his own use the substance of the widow and of the orphan entrusted to his care, and he associated at length with plunderers and shared their spoils, till his turpitude became known to the ministers of the law, and he was punished for the injuries he had done to his fellow-men.—More

examples might be furnished, we could follow sinners of every kind step by step from the first petty crime to the consummation of daring deeds and high-handed outrage; but enough has been shown to prove that the first step taken in sin makes sinning easy and pleasant, and that therefore we need not express so much surprise at the sight of great criminality in others, when we reflect how nearly we are at all times exposed to become what they are already. Let no man think himself secure in his imagined excellence, for confidence is the forerunner of deterioration; but when we are watchful, and regard with care every step we take, we may then hope to maintain that degree which we have once attained, and if we look upon every act of piety, no matter how trifling, as useful, we will indeed attain an enviable degree of moral excellence. Like the fair creation of God is made up of little creatures as well as large ones, as the humble violet is no less fragrant than the magnificent citron: so has every good act its beneficial effect, so does every obedience to God increase and strengthen the purity of our souls. And thus taught Ben Asai, one of the early sages of our nation: הוֹרֵץ לַמִּצְוָה קְלֵה וּבוֹרַח מִן הָעֲבֵרָה שְׂמִצּוּה גּוֹרֵרַת מִצְוָה וְעֵבֵרָה הוֹרֵרַת עֵבֵרָה “Run after every little good act, and fly from sin; for one good act is the forerunner of another, and one sin produces another sin.” And of this we may be assured, that no matter how unpleasant any good act may appear at first, its repetition will be easier than its first accomplishment; and therefore if the beginning is once made, we may with more safety look forward to a good ending. In the same way the first step in crime is the chief, and is the precursor of a long list yet to follow, each greater in magnitude, and each easier of accomplishment (as far as the will is concerned) than the other. If we therefore wish to preserve our virtue, we should watch ourselves with care, and withstand every temptation, which might tend to draw us from the right path. And moreover it is necessary that we should frequently examine ourselves dispassionately, to discover if we have erred; and if our investigation should convict us as wrong, it is our duty to set about at once altering the defects, and not wait till our debt to God has become heavy; for who knows if we will ever be able to alter, since every day may be our last. But if we have gone astray widely from the

way marked out by God, if indeed in our obduracy we have added sin to sin, till we are ripe for punishment, be the cause carelessness, pride or temptation: we should stop short in our career, as soon as we make the discovery, and not endeavour to hide our sins behind the plausible excuse, that our passions are stronger, or our opportunities greater than another's. In refutation to the first plea, or excuse for sin, we may answer, that it is not the positive strength of an individual's passions or natural inclination to sin which is the reason of one man's being better than another, but that one has them under better control than the other. For if we will watch ourselves and check the rising inclinations, we will be able to overcome strong impulses, and we can be virtuous in despite of them; and therefore also we find many a one with such a temperament always walking humbly before God and mindful of his commandments. On the other hand sluggish passions and weak inclinations may outgrow our strength of combating them, if we yield ourselves to their sway; and in the same manner we find indolent persons, who never displayed any fire, either of genius or activity, acting the parts of very wicked men.—With regard to the second excuse that our temptations have been great, we may remark, that temptations might be a valid excuse, if we were not informed as to the extent and nature of our duties; but this is not the case; God's law is explicit, and whatever is prohibited there should be avoided, as we would avoid destruction and death, no matter how great the incentive and opportunity for transgression may be. In matters of common honesty, no person would think of excusing himself for stealing, by saying, that he was left in a room where he saw treasures of which he could not refrain from stealing; and yet in religious and moral misdeeds we hear constantly excuses, not the least more reasonable, offered in defence of every species of wrong. So will the Sabbath-breaker tell you, that he measures the small amount of worldly gain against the positive enactment of the law; the man that gives way to his anger and commits an act of violence, that he was provoked to do an unlawful deed by the offences of another; the disobedient child, that his father asked an act of obedience more than he, the child, thought consonant with reason; and lastly, he that forswears his religion, professes his motives to be worldly pre-

ferment. And are grounds like these sufficient to excuse our sinning? and what better excuses can sinners make? To avoid such a ruinous course, we should rend the veil from our soul, expose her nakedness, and view her deformity with an unquailing eye. We must expect to find ourselves very sinful, and we should not endeavour to gloss over half of our faults. If now we turn away our eyes from our errors, and imagine ourselves better than we are, there is no hope of our ever reforming; but if we seriously grapple with the evil, and analyze our feelings carefully, place our turpitude in its natural hideousness before ourselves, we may look forward to the time when we may be freed from the burden of our sins. To effect a reformation, we should, in the first place, after discovering our wrongs, endeavour at once to discontinue them, and not leave off by degrees, for this would be compromising with our conscience. Let the profane scoffer not merely omit abusing those who believe, but at once he himself must think and speak respectfully of the Deity, and thus prepare himself for further amendment; the same may be said with regard to other sins. Having once left off sinning, we should set about a thorough reformation, or in other words, a change of conduct, and endeavour to act in every way conformably to the law of God, and prove in this manner, that the detestation of our crimes is inwardly felt and our renovated love of righteousness sincere and undivided. On former occasions we have dwelt at greater length upon the means of repentance, such as fasting, prayer and charity; and it is therefore merely necessary to refer to them now, and to state, that to promote the growth of righteousness, we should, after the custom of our ancestors, fast with contrition, pray with devotion, and distribute charity to the needy, to compensate in as far as lies in our power the wrong we have done, or to use the word of our ancients, to correct the evils in the sum of universal right which we have caused by the unholiness of our deeds. Now it may be asked: "Who should repent? will the great sinner's repentance be available? need the man who formerly was righteous repent, or will his prior good conduct counterbalance his present sins?" To these questions we have distinct answers given by the prophets, especially in the book of Ezekiel, chap. xviii., beginning at verse 20:

“The soul that sinneth shall die; the son shall not suffer for the sin of the father, and the father shall not suffer for the sin of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.—And the wicked, if he returns from all his sins which he has done, and keeps all my statutes, and does justice and charity, living he shall live, he shall not die. All his transgressions which he has done, shall not be remembered unto him; for the righteousness which he has done he shall live. Do I then desire the death of the wicked? says the Lord God; but that he should return from his ways and live.—And when the righteous returns from his ways and does wrong, like all the abominations which the wicked has done; shall he do them and live? All his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered, in the iniquity he has committed and in the sin he has sinned, in them shall he die.”

And further, says the prophet :

השליכו מעליכם את כל פשעיכם אשר פשעתם בם  
ועשו לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה ולמה תמותו בית ישראל:  
כי לא אחפץ במות המת נאם אדני ה' והשיבו וחיו :  
יחזקאל יח' לאי-לב:

“Throw from off you all your transgressions which you have transgressed in, and make yourself a new heart, and a new spirit; and why will you die, house of Israel? For I desire not the death of the guilty one, says the Lord God, return then, and live. Ezek. xviii. 31-32.

We have in this passage a perfect exposition of the various cases, stated to you this day, of righteous men relapsing into sin, and it is emphatically stated, that none of their good deeds shall be remembered, when they become transgressors. If, now, one who once loved virtue has yielded himself to vice, he must not think to escape punishment, for retribution will be awarded to him in the same manner it is to others; nor must he think that his former good actions will save him from becoming wicked, since we are told from high authority, and experience proves it, how little recollection of former goodness will rescue a man from a downward course of evil; and he that relies upon his attained eminence is but too likely to fall; and



he that looks with pride and disdain upon others worse than himself, and feels a self-exultation unmixed with lowliness, meekness, and gratitude, before God, is already far advanced on the road to sin, for security and carelessness have destroyed many a one. If, therefore, a righteous man should be betrayed into sin, let him arrest his step at the outset, and return at once with prayer and repentance. But far better would it be that the first step in sin never be taken, and better would it be that we never knew what pleasure is given by transgression, than that we should feel one moment of remorse and compunction. For our pursuit of virtue may be compared to the ascent of some slippery and icy mountain; we have the strength to toil onward, we have the capacity to reach the summit, but if we loiter on the way, if we, by carelessness or design, suffer our feet to slip: we cannot know where we may be able to halt in our descent, and if we even succeed to recover our firm footing by grasping at some shrubs that here and there are placed in our way, still we have to retrace the same weary rout which we had already once overcome, when our foot lost its hold. And, says the prophet: "If thou leavest me one day, two days I will forsake thee," meaning, that as man is bound to make the beginning in amendment, he will have to do an increased number of holy actions to regain the favour of God he has lost.—If in this way the righteous one too requires care and repentance, the wicked on the other hand should not despair of hope and pardon. The invitation to purify ourselves is held out to all men, and no matter how great the sins, we should consider, that it is not for us to set limits to God's kindness. Nor should we say: "We cannot repent;" for we are told that we should make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit, consequently it is within our power to change ourselves, whenever we please. It is only obduracy which withholds us, it is only our deafness to the affectionate invitation which is a clog upon our reformation. But what do we gain if we persevere in sin? only a temporary gratification of our appetites, or may be we succeed in making the world believe that we think nothing blameable in our conduct. And what do we lose thereby? we jeopard the everlasting peace of our souls, and incur and confirm the just indignation of our God whom our pre-

tensions cannot deceive. And why should pride prevent us from acknowledging to the world that we have been wrong? must I persist in violating the Sabbath, because I did so once publicly? must I nightly resort to the gaming house, because I was once seen there? must my drunkenness be of daily occurrence, because I was once drunk? must forbidden food be daily tasted, because I once transgressed? must I become a prowling thief, because I am known to have wronged a neighbour once? Surely the absurdity of such reasoning is too apparent to need a refutation; and yet it would appear that daily such motives prompt men to sin, or to persevere in sinning. How many children have not been permitted to enter the covenant, because their parents had once foolishly spoken against its necessity! how many intermixtures with gentiles have taken place, because one of a family began to set the example! and how many persons publicly violate the holy Sabbath, disregard holiness of life, live in incest, indulge in drunkenness, love dishonesty, because they love the evil which others do! Yet, if we but reflect, we must clearly see that we are, in thus doing, treading the way of death—yes, death of the soul, perhaps too the death of the body; and still there is that remedy which the great Father has vouchsafed, it is called repentance—a return from the evil, and a return to the good. But, if we come to repent, we must not look upon one or another of our crimes as more amiable than the other, for the prophet teaches: “If the wicked return from *all* his sins,” and thus, not *one* should be retained, if we truly wish to be forgiven.—If we thus come prepared by repentance, if we superadd deeds of virtue, if we approach with an humble faith in God that He will forgive us in his mercy: we may then hope with confidence that we will be restored to favour, that we have corrected the evil which we have committed.—When we have, in this manner, accomplished the desire of God, we will willingly again submit to his guidance; and if He chastises us then for our former sins, we will subject ourselves with resignation to the decree which dooms us to suffer; and even should our body sink into death, we will glorify the infinite One, who has suffered us to live long enough, that we might regain his lost favour, and not snatched us hence in our sinfulness!

Brethren! the prophet says in the name of God: "I desire not the death of the guilty one, return ye and live!" Thus we are warned; but do we heed it? Does not the Holy Spirit speak to unwilling ears? It was so in ancient days, when the temple fell a sacrifice to our transgressions; but we have yet been spared to glorify God by our conduct; let us then hope, that there are many to whom the warning will come like a refreshing shower to quicken into life the seeds of piety which have long lain dormant. This season is emphatically called that of repentance; may it then be indeed accomplished that many a repentant heart will seek the Lord and his righteousness, and return to Him in sincerity and love; so that when the coming Day of Forgiveness of sin closes, many a newly accepted child of God may cry out in the congregation of the faithful, in the fullness of faith: "The Lord is the God, his kingdom will endure for ever; He is our God, and there is none besides Him."

O Lord God! shower over us thy blessings and extend over us thy protecting arm. Forgive us our trespasses and purify us from our iniquities, and do not destroy us utterly according to thy mercy; and do Thou according to thy promises receive thy children that pray to thee; and stay the avenger, and withhold thy anger from the sinful creatures of thy hand that call on thee. And do Thou comfort our souls, and refreshen our spirit with thy grace, and let us experience on this day and for ever, that Thou art still the Father, and Protector, and Guardian of Israel; and on the day, which Thou hast appointed as the period on which atonement is made for us, let it be thy will to inscribe in thy books of remembrance: "My children your guilt is blotted out, you shall not die."—Let this be thy will, and mayest Thou speedily send the redeemer to Zion. Amen.

Elul 29th. }  
 Sept. 23d. } 5595.

## DISCOURSE XLIII.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

O OUR GOD and Creator ! we thy people are here assembled this day to offer up to Thee the grateful thanks of our hearts for the many favours which we have received from thy bounty. When in darkness the world was sunk, Thou calledst forth thy servant Abraham to shine like the light of the bright beacon on the bosom of the trackless ocean. Amidst idolatrous nations Thou didst preserve his son and his grandson, till people ignorant of thy worship learned to adore thy name. When Jacob went down to Egypt to fulfil his destiny, and the destiny of his house, in the land of the sons of Mitzraim: thy glory went thither with him, and he did not leave this earth, till his eyes had foreseen thy kingdom, that is to spread over all flesh. His children Thou didst not forsake; and when they had, unto the fourth generation, endured the oppression of the princes of Noph, Thou sentest thy servant Moses to work great things in thy name; and Pharaoh acknowledged thy almighty power, O Lord, and let thy children go free from bondage; and they went forth to follow thy guidance in the howling wilderness. There, Thou gavest them water out of the arid rock, and from heaven Thou bestowdest on them, in abundance, bread never before tasted by men. But their souls too Thou didst disenthral, Thou banishedst the gloom of superstition and false worship from their minds, and yon favoured Sinai witnessed thy descent to speak unto thy people, and to command them the path they should follow in serving Thee. But still thy goodness did not end here; and ever hast Thou been the Guardian of Israel; ever hast Thou watched over us, that we have not been cut off, and that the burden of misfortune has not crushed us. O do Thou, in thy mercy then, continue to bless us, to preserve us, and to protect us; and if not for our sakes, if our sins are too great, if our transgressions cry aloud for retribution: O do it for the sake of thy abundant mercies, and for the sake of the

covenant Thou didst make with our ancestors, when Thou chosest them as thy own people and treasure ! Amen.

### BRETHREN !

If a public teacher were to consult his own ease and popularity, he would assuredly never undertake to grapple with the follies of the age, which he, by his own individual exertions, certainly cannot hope to overcome. Nothing but ill will, perhaps hatred, perhaps taunts, can be his reward from those whose faults he may unwittingly expose, and very many others will think that remarks, which may wound the self-love of any class of his hearers, had better be omitted. Besides this, no sooner does any one presume to teach, than the tongue of detraction is busy with his character, and even the wicked will search for trifles, for small foibles, magnify them by the light of envy and malice, and declare that one so bad as he is, has no right to presume to correct others equally good and virtuous with himself. Add to this, that words will rarely effect reformation, at least an immediate one, in those for whose improvement he is anxious, and the feeling of mortification which the generally sensitive philanthropist experiences at seeing his advice contemned : and any one can easily determine, that he, who lifts up the voice of warning to his fellow-men, has undertaken not an enviable task. Yet it is necessary that there should be guides to show the way—sentinels to warn of the coming storm—leaders to commence ever the work of reformation ; and for the people in general it is requisite that they should look with respect upon their teachers, and listen with deference to the advice which they may offer in accordance with the law of God. Let no one think, that the teacher can take any pleasure in exposing faults ; for he that would be guilty of such an odious outrage deserves not to be called to the chair of instruction in Israel ; but that he is moved by a love towards his fellow-men to exhort them in time to escape from the vengeance of the outraged covenant, which will be executed on the hardened sinner who transgresseth and repenteth not. Is not the teacher himself one of the people ? is not their glory his glory ? is not their shame his shame ?—Why then should he be blamed when honest truth compels him to speak

against the misdeeds which he sees wrought around him, by which right is neglected—religion slighted—evil practised—and wickedness fostered?—The same already happened to Jeremiah, whose misfortune it was to live in wicked times, when the law of God had been almost forgotten, and when the last remains of our national glory were fast sinking to decay. He often had announced the punishment that would inevitably follow, and as a recompense for his faithfulness the powerful sinners of those days visited him, the humble prophet, with unmerited persecution. I must refer you to the twentieth chapter of his book, where you can read the details, and where also you will find the almost surprising fact that Jeremiah was an unwilling agent, equally so with Moses in the time of Pharaoh, mistrusting, like the great prophet, his power to arrest the evil, which to denounce he was sent. He says, speaking to God: “Thou hast persuaded me, O Lord, and I was persuaded, Thou hast given me strength, and didst prevail; (but) I have become an object of derision the whole day, every one does mock me. For whenever I will speak, I must cry aloud, must proclaim violence and destruction; for the word of the Lord has become to me shame and derision the whole day.—And I have said, I will not mention Him, nor speak any more in his name, but it was then in my heart like burning fire, enclosed within my bones, and I was tired of enduring it, and never shall I be able.” Here we see how gladly the prophet would have refrained from obtruding his advice upon the unwilling ears of the multitude, knowing that the more he spoke in the name of the Lord, the more he would find himself despised and hated; but the word would not be thus restrained, the message of which he was full could not thus be suppressed, and he felt as though a burning fire was consuming his heart and wasting his bones, until he had spread the message of Heaven before the people, and had cried it aloud in their ears, so that even unwilling they were compelled to hear.—Now, as an humble and unworthy follower of the great ones of former days, with powers far inferior beneath the least on their list, with a perfect consciousness that much may be alleged against myself, with a full knowledge that I have sinned as others have sinned: I think it my solemn duty to inveigh against the many derelictions

which I daily see practised by the remnant of Israel. I know full well, as well as any one can inform me, that in all likelihood but few will listen with patience to any thing I have to say, fewer yet will apply the moral to themselves, and fewer still will leave the place of worship amended in heart and resolved to alter their doings; but nevertheless I must discharge what I consider my duty, let the result be what it may; perhaps the heart of one may suddenly feel and acknowledge the power of the Lord, and who knows but that one sheep may return to the sheep-fold of the great Shepherd, when it hears that it has strayed in its wanderings, and that the return way is not impeded by obstacles which cannot be surmounted.

Brethren! the painful truth must force itself upon the conviction of every one who thinks, that the present age is not one of religion, but that, on the contrary, the duties which the law demands are daily more and more neglected.—Why is this? why is the house of God empty? why are the Sabbaths and festivals neglected? why do those fall off who formerly were true and steadfast? why does the father show the evil example to his sons, and the mother to her daughters? It is, because the age has learned to love gain more than the law, riches more than virtue, the perishable more than the everlasting, in a word, to love the outward world more than the almighty God! But why should we of the present day be so much more sedulous in the pursuit of wealth, than were our forefathers? have we any claim to a longer duration of life than they had? It may, indeed, be freely conceded, that the present age has made wonderful advances in the useful sciences, in refinement and luxury; all the elegancies of life are now more appreciated and more accessible than they were before our days; and a general spirit of enquiry, for good or for evil, is spread abroad, before which error and fanaticism will ere long have to retire. All this the moralist will cheerfully acknowledge; but he will instance it as an additional motive for gratitude to the supreme Ruler, for having showered down so many more blessings on us than on our fathers. But how do the worldly repay this kindness! Instead of repairing to the house of God to return their thanks to the Dispenser of all good, their feet do but seldom seek the sacred threshold; and if they do go, they arrive at so late an

hour, as to disturb by their entrance the assembled worshippers; and when there, their indecorous behaviour, their inattention, their conversation where silence should reign, their looks of disdain, as though they honoured the worship by their presence: all prove that their hearts are not engaged in the divine service, and that their attendance for the once or twice a year is but a mere outward show, a display more of their adherence to religion than a sincerely felt devotion. And when do many of these persons come? on the usual day of the weekly rest? on a festival, when their business might suffer by their absence? No—only on such days when their business cannot be attended to, when the laws of men forbid work to be done; but at other times the world is more loved than God, and the courts of his holy house are left untrodden of their feet. And do reasoning men call this devotion? do Israelites call this worshipping the God of their fathers? Wo, wo, on the sinning generation! this is mockery! this is profanation! not such is the service which the Lord desires, not such the servants. For already against the sinners of his own day did Isaiah testify (i. 10–13): “Hear ye the word of the Lord, chiefs of Sodom, hearken to the instruction of our God, people of Gomorrah. To what purpose serves me the mass of your sacrifices, says the Lord, I am sated with the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fatlings, and the blood of steers, of lambs, and of wethers, I desire not. When you come to be seen in my presence—who asks it at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more the offering of falsehood, it is to me incense of abomination—newmoons, Sabbaths, festivals—I cannot endure sin with festivity.” From this it will clearly appear how odious is to God that pretended holiness, where the outward conformity does not find a responding feeling in the heart; and no matter how much soever we have succeeded in glossing over our faults, no matter how much polishing we have applied to the unsightly surface: we may be perfectly assured, that the inward corruption will not escape Him to whom all is known.—No, brethren, this is not the way which can be pleasing to our heavenly Father; if we are bad, if we are sinners, do not let us figure in our minds an image of excellence and apply it to ourselves; if we have transgressed the law let us not, in the



name of justice, lay claim to the title of pious and virtuous men; for in this way we would add to our other sins the crime of insulting the Holy Spirit, which we yet cannot deceive. As well might an Israelite sit down to a table covered with forbidden food and ask God's blessing upon the sinful meal! Would such worship not better be omitted? And yet this is the spirit of our age as it was of Isaiah's, that on high occasions we now and then show our faces in God's temple, we bring our sacrifice, we display a certain zeal and energy for a moment, and imagine that in this way we have satisfied our conscience; but no sooner does interest call, no sooner become crime and sin a little more profitable than virtue and piety, than we forsake the standard of the Lord, "we see the thief," to use the words of Scripture, "and run after him, and have our portion with adulterers." And do we not see hourly the bitter fruits of this mockery of religion? Where is the wholesome discipline which parents should exercise over their children? it is sacrificed to interest; the father fears that his son may not become great enough and rich enough; and straightway he permits him, nay teaches and in a measure compels him, to desecrate the Sabbath-day, whilst he perhaps himself makes his appearance at the Synagogue, and even pretends to direct and lead others.—But, brethren, I must put it to your own conscience to answer the question without self-love or self-deception, whether it is really necessary for the advancement of your children, that religion should be so totally neglected? whether it is absolutely requisite that your offspring should be taught by you to despise God's law?—In yon Decalogue which surmounts our ark of the law, in yon Decalogue which the Lord gave to his people for their government, it is written: "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother," and you are right in exacting implicit obedience from your children, in accordance with the law of God. But the same Decalogue also teaches: "Remember the Sabbath," and this you imagine may be safely left unenforced. Are you so blind as not to see, that you cannot obtain your children's esteem, if you show them the example, or permit them to neglect this precept? Will not the child reason thus: "The obedience I owe my parents and to the law of God rest upon the same foundation, and if one is unneces-

sary, the other is equally so." But you may perhaps say, that this reasoning is never resorted to; nevertheless, experience may be safely appealed to, to prove, that filial obedience has much deteriorated under the shameful want of religious education from which so many of the rising generation suffer. Formerly the father spoke, and no one of his family would contradict him; but now, the son rises in judgment against the father, and the daughter against the mother; and that deference to parental authority in general, and that respect for old age, which was once so becoming in youth, is, alas! fast wearing away among us; and even the union of families and the unanimity of interest and wishes are disappearing before the selfish pursuits of the individual members of the household. I may, perhaps, be charged with overdrawing the picture, and of adding fictitious traits to my portrait; but I believe that I have underrated the truth, and that the evil is yet greater than I have stated. And why is it so? because the children are not early taught to love God above all things, and that his favour is to be prized more than riches; and if even it should have been taught in infancy, no sooner is the boy old enough to aspire to a profession, or to embark in trade, than he is flatly told, that now, as he has to make his living, he may neglect the Sabbath, and eat whatever is put before him; it is his business to get along in the world, but not to be stopped by speculative opinions. I know well enough, that there are honourable exceptions to this almost universal degeneracy; but too many, alas! do as I have represented it; and the consequences may easily be calculated on with certainty: the child grows up without any religion whatever, he neither fears God, for that his parents have not taught him, and he honours not these, because he cannot see from his own reasoning that they deserve it from him. And when such a one is asked, why he is not religious, he answers, that he does know little or nothing about it, not having had any instruction and but little of example before him, and he blames his parents for not educating him a servant of the Lord. It is indeed true, that an excuse of this kind is not enough to justify a want of religion in any one; since the means of self-education are at present so plentifully scattered about, that whoever wishes it can learn, and there are enough

righteous yet left whose example may safely be followed. But this does in nowise do away with the blame attachable to parents and guardians for the entire want of, or the little care devoted to, a religious domestic education; for no matter how much a child may learn at school, when removed from his parents' eye, it is the domestic fireside nevertheless, where the word of God should be made dear to him. For what does the Bible teach? "And thou shalt teach them (the words of God) diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." I may freely leave it to the reflection of my auditors to determine, whether this is their mode of doing, whether they make the law of God lovely in their children's eyes, whether they show them by their example, no less than by precept, the way they ought to go. But, alas! how many parents are deficient in this respect! how much of frivolity, how much of trifling, do the children see from their elders! how anxious are the pursuits of pleasure and of gain persevered in, whilst religion lies in one corner, neglected and unheeded. The child soon perceives that its parents labour on the Sabbath, that they do not go to the place of worship even if the weather be inviting, but that the dancing rooms, the concert-halls and the theatres, are crowded even amidst the stifling heats of summer and the terrific storms of winter; in short, the child sees the house of God empty, and the resorts of pleasure thronged to overflowing. Suppose now, that an innocent child in the simplicity of his heart, should ask his father, why he goes not to the Synagogue whither he himself had been sent in the company of an esteemed relative? or, suppose that a daughter should demand of her mother the reason for her being prohibited from doing her little playful work, while the parents are engaged in the pursuit of their usual avocation;—I ask, what must be the parents' feelings? or how can they hope that their children should be better than themselves, if shame seals their lips, or if such examples are perpetually exhibited.

And still some parents desire to be called Israelites, and are unwilling to suffer an imputation of a disregard of religion to be fastened on them. Vain delusion! the substance is yielded,

and the shadow grasped! And their children they will not permit, as is but just and proper, to mingle in marriage with other nations! But how can this be prevented by the system of education so generally pursued? For, correct religious knowledge is not at all, or at least but imperfectly, imparted, and they must see, that to their elders at least, worldly interest is the paramount good; how can it then be expected of them, that they should abstain from following their perverted notions of right, when inclination, passion, and interest call, merely to gratify a parent's whim?—And even suppose that the rising generation should be, like the present one, vacillating between the service of pleasure and money on the one, and that of God on the other hand, what can be the benefit to piety and true morality thereby? But even this can hardly be expected, if things are not changed; for daily more and more will fall off, our number already too small, especially in this favoured country, will be gradually diminished by apostacy, by intermarriage, and by death; and, to speak in human probability, in less than the age of one man the name of Israelite will hardly be known in this land, save as an object of memory, to be referred to as something that has been. I do not say that this will be the actual result, but only that the misconduct of our people tends towards it.—For lift up your eyes, who are in the habit of attending in this house to adore the God of your fathers, and see how few young men resort hither, of how many families not even one attends on the Sabbath, how many middle-aged persons are known to follow their pursuits on the holy day, and how many children are put to work on the day which God ordained should be observed, even by the stranger and the slave, nay, the ox and the ass—see how many children are without the means of being informed of their eternal welfare, when the fault might easily be remedied by a concerted action: I say, view all this, as I have done, with anguish, with sorrow, with regret, and with shame at such degeneracy of Israel, and then blame the philanthropist, if you can, when he declares that our people are hastening along the downward path of ruin and destruction. It is useless to deny it, that we have fallen upon evil days; for but rarely has the religion of God been so much neglected as it now is, and the result thereof

will be dreadful indeed if the evil is not speedily arrested. We flatter ourselves occasionally with the reflection, that we must needs be better than our forefathers; for they worshipped idols, which we do not.—Admitted; but have we not our idols too? They indeed worshipped images, the works of their own hands, they only however wanted to imitate their neighbours, they wanted to be rid of the burden of the law, they did not wish to serve God, that they may be allowed to drink wine out of basons, wallow in forbidden luxuries, profane the Sabbath, and follow the evil desires of their hearts. For we read in the xxviii chapt. of Isaiah, how the people of his day had become corrupt, by following pleasure and gluttony and neglecting the law, and they fancied, to use the prophet's words: "We have made a covenant with death, and with the grave we have made a contract, the overflowing stream when it passes will not come over us; for we have made lies our protection, and with falsehood we cover ourselves." They thus imagined, that whatever evil might pass over the world would not come to them, they were in their own notions amply secured by their doings, although they left unminded the law of their God.—In the same manner we also have our idols, if not precisely stocks and stones, certainly those having equally pernicious consequences. Our worship of the present day, as indicated already, are the pursuits of pleasure and gain. Do we not sacrifice to them all that we hold dear? the peace of our own souls, the welfare of the community, and the moral elevation of our children? Do we not also neglect the law of God? Do we not look upon the Sabbath-breaker with perfect complaisance? Do we not swallow the things which God has declared unclean? Do we not seek riches as the thing the most to be desired? Do not men spend day after day, week after week, month after month, in one constant round of unceasing exertions to obtain a larger portion of their idol? And what at last is the great advantage in being so immensely rich? suppose your gold is too much to be counted—suppose your ships cover every ocean—suppose you have possessions in all parts of the world—have you therefore arranged your covenant with death? will the grave not ere long claim its own, and enclose your body within the dark gloomy dwelling? And even before this period arrives, may not the sweeping stream—the devouring

flame—the destroying storm—the vicissitudes of trade—carry off the idol you so ardently love? And then you will call down maledictions on your own head, for having neglected those interests which neither the stream, nor the fire, nor the storm can injure, the peace everlasting, the treasury of virtue, which can be obtained only by serving God.

But in the very pursuit of wealth there is at times something so heartless, that the man of feeling, even if we leave religion totally out of view, ought to shrink from it as he would from destruction. Those often, who are striving to outdo their neighbours, resort to such means to oppress the less cunning, that many a one whom the laws cannot punish for a positive infringement, is yet so guilty in moral equity, that he is scarcely more honest than a highway-robber. Many a one is attended by menials, who acquired his gain by underhanded trickery. The world knows perhaps nothing of the knavery of such people; they are perhaps called honest, upright, honourable, and worthy members of the community; but who with the smallest portion of humanity would wish to have fraudulently sent a husband to an early grave, and turned his widow and children adrift to gain a pittance by daily labour, reduced from affluence to poverty! Who would like to live in a palace, the very stones of which are cemented, so to say, by the tears of a ruined partner, or of a defrauded public who confided in his honesty, but found themselves outwitted and overreached by superior address, without being able to punish the wrong they deeply feel, but cannot expose!—If you now do bow to such idols, are you less idolaters than were the Israelites of old? If you forget justice—love—good-fellowship—religion—kindred—friends—and God, merely to obtain gold, which avails nothing in the grave; are you not cherishing a false worship?—And if you yourselves think such pursuits unworthy of yourselves—if you believe yourselves bound to love and worship our Father in heaven beyond any thing that exists—how can you wish your children and those entrusted to your care to do what you think evil? how can you teach, or even permit them, to slight the religion in which we all were born? Is it reasonable, that you can be justified in inducing them to depart from those duties, which you yourselves look upon as necessary to your happiness?

And in the same degree as the pursuit of gain is injurious to the finer moral perceptions, we may assert, that, without doubt, every one who has had any experience, must often have felt how unsatisfactory are the enjoyments of pleasure and the possession of riches. We think we should be extremely happy to see something which we hear highly spoken of, to hear a celebrated singer, to taste a particular food ; but no sooner has experience come, than we despise the bauble that allured us. We fancy that the possession of a given sum would satisfy all our reasonable desires ; God blesses us, and the wish is obtained ; but as if by magic another and a larger boon, is at once coveted, and when this is got, more and more will be thirsted for to still the yet unquenched desire for gold ; just like a spoiled child that cries for a rattle or some other toy which, when obtained, it breaks wantonly after being delighted with it for a brief space, and now it cries for a handsomer and more valuable plaything.—Virtues on the contrary are never cloying, never despised when once acquired ; and it may safely be asserted, that few would take the money back, which they have expended in charity, even if it were offered to them, with an understanding that every merit of the gift should thus be cancelled ; for there is so much holiness in rectitude and virtue, that hardened indeed must be that sinner who could part with the least of his acquired mental and spiritual riches.

It was said in the commencement of our subject, that we had no more right to neglect religion than our fathers had before us. But few indeed there are who would deny this in theory ; yet how many deny it in practice, nay even in words ! We thus hear it often alleged, that our fathers were ignorant, but that we in a more enlightened age should be above such prejudices. Now, no one will gainsay the evident fact that this age has made improvements, wonderful improvements, if you will, upon the discoveries of former periods ; but it is utterly denied, that in moral sciences the smallest advance has been achieved, simply because it is impracticable. The man who builds a steam-engine, which travels through an entire degree of latitude in one brief hour, so as almost to annihilate time and space, has thereby conceived no stronger or better notions of God, and of the nature of his Maker, than the laborious farmer

who drives his ox-cart, at a space perhaps sixty times slower. There is no connection whatever between the outward and the inward world, any more than that, if new benefits are vouchsafed through inventions and improvements to mankind, more gratitude should be shown to the Giver of wisdom, and a greater promptness displayed to engage in his service. What would a human master think, if his servants for a few pennies of daily wages would toil from morning till night, but as soon as he gave them a bag of silver for their pay, they should simultaneously refuse doing any work whatever, or at least no more than they might call enough?—What would any one call it, but sheer ingratitude?—And yet we act so towards God! When the name of Jew was a passport to ill-treatment; when we were oppressed in the whole world; when many tears and few joys were our lot, we were cheerful, willing, servants to our God. The world then admired our constancy, our devoted heroism. But now enlargement has been given to us, persecution for opinion's sake is no longer the fashion, and especially in this land we can worship God without let or hindrance, we here have a perfect equality with the other inhabitants: yet here it is, where our religion is the most neglected, where we have truly succeeded in making our name a by-word for carelessness and neglect of our glorious hope. When punished we were good, when free we are wicked.—Is that the gratitude which we are to offer to our Father and heavenly Master? Is it thus we are to celebrate the Passover and our redemption from slavery? Is it thus that we can hope for a continuation of the divine favour? Certainly not, and indeed! indeed! we may justly fear that ere long the weight of God's vengeance will fall heavily upon us who are guilty of sinning against his just decrees. For we imitate the vices of the gentiles, but neglect their virtues. They pursue gain and pleasure, and we do likewise. But they devote money to public worship; they establish schools for the education of their poor; they hasten to their churches; they honour the teachers of their religion; they, many of them at least, try to serve God, although in some respects erroneously; but we are backward in supporting the worship of olden days; we hardly think, that there are poor who too ought to partake of an education that



they might learn to fear the Lord ; we stay away for months from the holy but humble Synagogue ; we honour not those in whose mouths the law of God dwells ; and we cannot devote the necessary time to serve our Maker—and yet we alone have the true law to guide our erring footsteps.—Is this to last for ever ? Is this indifference to have no end ? Is there never to be harmony among us to effect jointly measures for public benefit ? How long shall the spectacle be witnessed, that the good which one proposes is to be thwarted by the folly of another : and that the good of our scattered congregations is to be lost sight of, because those whose business it is will not meet and discuss in friendship and concert the necessary measures ?—Believe me, brethren, that there exists a great mass of evil ; but it can be removed, when once we are anxious to effect a reformation, and when we are truly conscious of our errors.—Repentance and changes, even great ones, are within the compass of probability, and of this too the Bible speaks. A remarkable instance is found in the king Josiah, as we read in the *Haphtorah* of to-day. His father and grandfather had been excessively sinful, and their abominations had filled the land with wickedness. Josiah was very young when he became king ; but no sooner was he made conscious of the sins he was unwittingly committing, than he returned in truth to the Lord ; and did, not like Pharaoh of Egypt, who spoke : “Who is the Lord ?” and who refused to obey the prophet’s mandate to let Israel go free ; but like his ancestor David, who submitted to the decree of God, whom he had offended. The Passover in commemoration of the Exodus had for years been neglected ; but now Josiah restored it in all its former splendour, and he purified the land of the images which filled it.—Of him too it is said, 2 Kings, xxiii. 25 :

וכמהו לא היה לפניו מלך אשר שב אל ה' בכל לבבו  
 ובכל נפשו ובכל מאדו ככל תורת משה ואחריו לא קם  
 כמהו : כלבים ב' כג' כה' :

“ And like him there was before no king, who returned unto the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, like all the law of Moses, and after him arose none other.”

Here we see that a son of a wicked king, and who surely did not lack those who would have ministered to his vices, was truly repentant and followed the law. Let such an example not be lost upon us. True, the spirit of the age is avarice; let us, who are of the house of Israel, resist it; let us in our endeavour to obtain a living not overstep the legitimate bounds; and if riches should be found unattainable with a strict adherence to the law, then let us prefer to be poor, let us then enrich our souls though we be humble. Thus many of our forefathers became the great ones of the earth; thus they earned themselves imperishable fame, better far than gold and silver; and thus too can we all arrive at that glorious state, that we can depart this life and leave not one behind to curse our name, and be assured, that there will be many who will honour our memory and bless the day that we were permitted to see the light of the world.

Do Thou, O our Father! grant us thy salvation, and remove from our bosom the heart of stone, and give us the heart of flesh which Thou hast promised; so that we all may serve Thee, and deserve thy favour which is unending. Amen.

Nissan 14th. }  
April 1st. } 5596.

NOTE.—This Discourse should properly be the forty-eighth, in order of time; but it is inserted in this place to allow the seven lectures on the Messiah to follow each other consecutively.

## DISCOURSE XLIV.

## THE MESSIAH.

O OUR GOD and Lord! through the mouth of thy prophets Thou hast promised hope and salvation to thy people, and hast announced unto them, that they should ever find in Thee protection and salvation. Do Thou, therefore, now display over us thy almighty power, and manifest towards us thy wonderful deeds, that the gentiles may not say: "Where is their God." But let them see, and let them feel, that oppress and deride thy children, that Thou art the Lord, and that thy reign extends from the beginning to the consummation of all created things, and that for ever and ever Thou art God. Amen.

## BRETHREN!

Often, doubtlessly, has the subject of the advent of a Messiah been urged upon your attention, both by Israelites and those who are of a different persuasion. Full often, too, has this subject been learnedly and ably handled by controversial writers and oral disputants; and, nevertheless, professed believers in revelation are nowise agreed as to the nature of the Messiah, nor the object and intent of his mission. Still, because the doctrine of the coming of this peculiar favourite of God is so vitally important, it is absolutely necessary to endeavour to obtain some correct idea concerning him, despite of the many erroneous and generally false notions and doctrines, promulgated chiefly by persons interested in maintaining views materially differing from ours.—Let us elucidate, first, the nature of the Messiah by the light which Scripture, the only true test, affords, and next, we must by the same rule trace out the extent and scope of his mission.

Our opponents aver that the deity is of a divided nature, that is to say, that although God be *one*, there still exists a modi-

fication in this oneness, to use an expressive word, which permits God to divide himself into god and man; or in other words, one part of the deity could, and at one time did, invest himself with all the attributes of humanity and mortality, whilst the other portion retained the divine attributes and the superintending power over all nature, and even over the other portion of himself which had become man. All this was done, because in the fall of Adam all mankind are averred to have earned everlasting condemnation; and therefore it is contended, that to insure them salvation, God himself had to descend into the body of the seed of the woman (Eve), to be enabled, by the assumption of the human form, to offer himself an atonement for the sins of mankind to the other portion of the deity not invested with humanity. From all which it would appear to be the opinion of the sect alluded to, that, to be able to effect the salvation of man, God had to sacrifice himself to himself to make it possible for him to save, unto happiness and salvation, the creatures whom he had formed for happiness and salvation. This incarnation of the deity moreover, which it is alleged was to be, and actually was sacrificed for the sins of man, they call Christ, or Messiah, which rendered into the vernacular tongue, means the anointed chief or priest, appointed to this station by having been consecrated with oil, by anointing with which priests and chiefs among us used to be appointed. In short, they say that the Messiah whom the prophets foretold was to be a god, and a portion of the deity, that through him alone the salvation of all men was to be effected, and that lastly, this personage; or to use their term, this divine personage, has made his appearance already, and that, therefore, the prophecies alluding and referring to a redeemer to be sent have been already accomplished. I believe, brethren, that I have stated to you, with as much candour and fairness as I was able to summon, the nature, attributes, and scope of the Nazarene doctrines, which I did, in order to lay before you a concise view of our ideas on the same subject, and to prove, how they are deducible and strengthened by the plain import of the text of Holy Writ.—First, we contend that the everblessed God is not capable of division or change; and, secondly, we maintain that nowhere is there even a remote allusion to prove the necessity of the

intervention of a mediator to insure salvation.—God, according to our opinion, is infinite, immeasurable, and indivisible; that is to say, we have no conception of the period when his existence began, nor can we conceive any possibility of his ceasing to exist; immeasurable we call Him, because the immense extent of space is not able to hold Him, He does not exist in the world, but the world exists in, as well as through Him; and indivisible we believe Him, because no material body can separate Him into parts, no walls can bar Him out, no seas can withstand Him, and no darkness can screen us from his presence. And thus also we are taught in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there, and if I should lie down in the deep, I should find Thee.” The whole of this eminently beautiful, devotional Psalm must be familiar to you, and it is therefore enough to refer you to it, for the sake of proving that the Bible-doctrine of the Deity is an entire omnipresence and a perfect indivisibility.—Now, what can be meant by the idea of god father and god son, but that the divine essence is divided into two and distinct persons, of whom one must of necessity have the priority of existence? For, grant that the existence of both is coeval, or that they were always co-existent, then it must follow that there are two independant powers; for, if one of the persons be more powerful than the other, how can there be harmony and concert? or even grant this, on account of the perfection of the divine nature, it yet is left to be determined, who of the two is the creator? The absurdity of a divided deity is thus made perfectly manifest, it being so completely dissonant with common sense, besides which the holy law plainly declares: שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחר “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the sole eternal Being,” or according to the common version, “the Lord our God, the Lord is one!” This certainly means that a plurality of the divine power is entirely dissonant with the doctrines of revelation. But, say the Nazarenes: “We do not say that there are two gods, but that the father and son are one.” Let us examine this doctrine also by the same standard we just now adopted. The father, I presume, we must suppose to be the creator of all, and conse-

quently the elder power, and of course the son; as well as every thing else in nature, is a creature or an emanation from the creator. If you admit this, and you must come to this at last, then it follows that God has at one time or the other divested himself of a portion of his power and conferred it upon another personage; or worse, that He has divided himself into two or perhaps more parts. But independantly of the entire unintelligibleness of such an opinion, it is contradicted by the plain letter of Scripture, which says, Isaiah xlii. 8: "I am the everlasting One, this is my name, and my glory to any other I will not give, nor my praise to images." Ibid. xliii. 10-12: "You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen; that you may know, and believe me, and understand that I am He; before me no god was formed, and after me there will be none. I, only I, am the Lord, and there is none beside me a saviour. I have myself told, and saved, have caused you to hear, and among you was no stranger god; and you are then my witnesses, says the Lord—and I am God." Ibid. xliv. 6: "Thus says the Lord, Israel's King and his Redeemer, the Lord of the universe: I am the first, and I am the last, and without me there is no god." Verse 24: "I am the Lord who make all; who spread out the heaven by myself, and alone extend the earth." And in this same manner also speaks Jeremiah x: "But the Lord God is truth, He is the living God and the everlasting King;—Yes, thus ye shall say to them, the gods that made not the heaven and the earth shall perish from the earth and from beneath these heavens." All these passages, which could be fortified by innumerable others, clearly demonstrate, that the God of the Bible is not of a divided nature, but of simple essence and of eternal duration. What are the words we have quoted: "I am the first, and I am the last, and without me there is no God?" This verse surely means to say, that the Creator God is alone the King and Redeemer, for besides Him no other god exists; how then can there be a second personage to share the honours of the Supreme? How can reason bear it, to assert in one phrase that one God alone does all, and claims all the honour of worship, and in another moment to maintain that, nevertheless, there are two parts composing the

same one, both claiming and deserving the same regard and adoration?—We could carry this argument out to a much greater length, but it is not expedient to treat the subject in a controversial light, any further than to exhibit to your understanding the absurdity and the contradiction to revelation which are presented in the idea of a plurality in the deity, or of a division in the divine essence. From all the above we must deduct, as a natural consequence, that Messiah cannot be god, since that would say, in effect, that God himself is the Messiah, or that a portion of himself were the Messiah, both of which doctrines have been shown to be fallacious.—In the second place, especially with reference to the object of the sending of this messenger, he is not to come to save sinners, much less to die in atonement for them, because we believe, and can prove, that God requires no assistance to enable Him to save the man whom He has created. Where first the idea of a vicarious sacrifice took its rise we are not able to determine; but of one thing we are perfectly certain, that not the most distant allusion is found in the Bible, which if rationally interpreted, will bear an interpretation favourable to this doctrine. And let us take a calm view of the assertion, that God could not forgive man for the original sin committed by Adam, till a vicarious atonement (for this, I believe, is the term employed) was made; and what does it amount to? but that God is unable to forgive sins, which is a monstrous absurdity, even admitting that by the sins of our original progenitors we were debarred from all admission into happiness. But is this true? By no means; for as regards the first, God emphatically styles himself the Forgiver of sins, the Pardoner of iniquities, expressed in the two Hebrew words כולח and כוחל consequently He requires no one person or not any one thing to authorize Him to forgive, if He, the All-wise, thinks that the atonement made, or suffered, or even contemplated by the sinner, be enough. As also we read in Exod. xxxiv. 6–7, “The Lord Everlasting, is a God merciful and gracious, long of anger and great in kindness and truth; He preserveth kindness unto the thousandth generation, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, yet suffereth not guilt to pass unpunished.” Here the words employed, as plainly as words can speak, distinctly announce

that every sin will be visited with God's indignation, that every sinner must be punished; yet that, nevertheless, there is a remedy, a return to righteousness, a change of conduct, which will cause God to show himself not as the Avenger of outraged righteousness but as the merciful Father, who will bear with the fault of the child, when he alters, chastise with moderation, and then forgive the guilt. This is so beautifully expressed by the word נשא which originally means to *bear, to carry, to suffer*, and thus it expresses the indulgent kindness of the Father of all more strongly, than any other term implying forgiveness could have done. All this must tend to prove that the eternal Lord of all is of himself able, without assistance or intervention, to bear with and to forgive whatever sins may have been committed from nature's birthday to her dissolution; He is, indeed, כול יכול all sufficient and truly אל שרי the almighty God, able to effect every thing; and there consequently can be no being able to afford and grant him the slightest assistance.— Yet it may be said: “True, God is able; but was He willing? was not death decreed in consequence of Adam's sins?” To this we answer, that death was indeed decreed; but not death of the soul, not the damnation of the vital principle, but the decease only of what is naturally mortal, when divested of that ethereal spark which bestowed on it life and motion. Am I understood?—Yet with regard to everlasting damnation having been the portion of every one that died before a given period, it is absolutely contradicted, not only by the spirit, but by the letter of the Bible also. First, nowhere in direct terms is it announced that a Messiah should come to redeem *souls* from purgatory; and secondly, we are taught that we have power over sin, as God said to Cain: “If thou doest act well thou wilt be accepted, but if thou doest not act well, sin will rest at the door, and to thee is his desire, but thou canst rule over him.”—Here a direct dominion over sin is conceded to man. Further, in Leviticus xviii. 5, we read: “And you shall observe my statutes and my judgments, which a man is to do and live through them, I am the Lord.” Deut. xxxii. 47: “For it is not an empty matter for you, on the contrary, it is your life.”—Solomon, the wise king of Israel, speaking of the divine wisdom, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of the law, says



(Prov. viii. 35): "For he that finds me, has found life, and has obtained favour of the Lord." Chap. ix. 11: "For through me thy days will be many, and multiplied will be to thee the years of life." Chap. iii: "Long life are on her right, on her left riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. A tree of life is she to those that lay hold of her, and her supporters are happy." In Ezekiel, also, chap. xx. we have a confirmation, (if any confirmation could even be needed to fortify the doctrines of the blessed Moses,) in the following words: "And I gave unto them my statutes, and my judgments I made known to them, which a man is to do and live through them. And also my Sabbaths I gave to them to be for a sign between me and them, to show that I am the Lord that sanctified them." All these passages, selected without any particular care from various books of Scripture, go far to prove, that God in giving the Sabbath and the statutes, contained in the law delivered from Sinai intended, that their observance should insure life and happiness; and unless any one can show, what indeed some have asserted, that the Israelites had no fixed idea of a reward and punishment hereafter, it is also evident that salvation of the soul must be there included, since no other requisite is ever spoken of or even alluded to. And that the Israelites knew of a hereafter, can also be demonstrated by various scriptural passages, all admitting of but one interpretation. When Abigail, the wife of Nabal, the Carmelite, met David to dissuade him from his intended violence against her husband, she said, among other things: "And a man rose to pursue thee and to seek thy soul; but may the soul of my Lord be bound up in the bond of life with the Lord thy God." (1 Samuel xxv. 29.)—In this passage, the word נפש or soul is used twice, first, with regard to the injury intended by the man Saul against David, secondly, in the blessing pronounced upon the latter. Though now the word *Naphesh* often means person, yet the phrase נפש בקש means to take life, or to separate soul and body, and consequently has then no *material* reference; therefore, when the word is used again in the next sentence, it must needs bear the same meaning, and refer then to the spiritual soul also; or in other words, Abigail prayed that the pious shepherd of Israel, whom she

addressed, might be found acceptable before the Lord his God, and be ultimately rewarded by Him with life unending, despite that now a man, distinguished and great, endeavoured to hunt him down, and to seek his death. Also in the book of Psalms David expresses his hope of a glorious permanence in the following glowing words: "I will bless the Lord who has counselled me; also in the dark nights when my thoughts oppress me, have I placed the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I cannot be moved. Therefore is glad my heart, and it rejoices my glory (the soul), and also my flesh (the body) will rest securely. For Thou leavest not my soul to the grave, Thou wilt not suffer thy pious one to see corruption. Thou makest known to me the path of life; the fulness of the joy is before thy face, the pleasures on thy right hand are unending." (Psalm xvi. 7-11.) Also, in Psalm xxvii. 13: "Did I not believe to behold happiness from the Lord in the land of life."—The foregoing quotations must certainly tend to prove, almost to demonstration, that the Israelites had a perfect notion, and a beautiful one too, of the true happiness which awaits the righteous, and that they expected to reach this happiness through a righteousness founded upon the execution of the so much undervalued observance of the tenets of the Mosaic religion. If now, as it must be evident, happiness and life could be reached through these means at the time of the prophets, it is apparent, that, unless a limitation had been mentioned, the same means now must produce, and this inevitably so, the same results; or to state the matter so as to offer an answer to the objection raised, that God is willing and able to save mankind unto salvation, without the intervention of a mediator or a vicarious sacrifice to be offered up as an atonement for the original sin of Adam; since a man's own righteousness, based upon an observance of the law of God, is enough to save him. By this, however, we do not mean to say, that any man can set up a measure or a quantity of righteous deeds, beyond which he need not go to insure the desired happiness; but that, if a man has done all in sincerity and truth, that ever was in his power of accomplishing, he will doubtlessly receive the favour of that Being, whom in sincerity he has endeavoured to worship. Consequently, the doctrine maintained by us cannot be

charged with the defect of a tendency to render us proud and careless; but, on the contrary, it will cause us to be circumspect and humble, since by these means alone, we will be induced to make exertions to obtain the favour of the Lord, which to do has been placed altogether within our power; for, in addition to the gift of a rational soul, our God and King gave us his law for our government, by doing which a man may live virtuously and reach life and happiness.

In the foregoing, it has been briefly shown, that the Deity is not divisible, and that, consequently, He never could have been divided; add to which, that God is a pure spirit, not liable to change or decay, not visible to, nor tangible by the senses: and it must be conceded, that the divine essence, or God himself, never could have been inclosed within a mortal body; for to have thus been mixed up with mortality would have rendered the godhead liable to change, death, and corruption; and then the deity, while on earth in such a body, must have been tangible, material, and visible to the eyes; and does not the prophet say: "And to whom will you compare God, and what form will you liken to Him?" (Isaiah xl. 19.) But even let this pass; still if this personage did actually appear, and actually was slain ignominiously to effect an atonement for mankind: what need is there for any exertion to live virtuously, since a complete atonement must have been made? And if it is contended, that the death of the Messiah was only to remove the disability to happiness which before existed: then we ask, what was the state of the righteous of former times? were they saved or not? if the first, how could they be happy with the original sin unatoned for? and if the last, how could God give them a law, which after all could not satisfy his indignation? But pass over this objection also, as more ingenious than solid: yet we may ask, what are men of the present day to do to obtain felicity after once their disability has been removed? what law are they to obey? Our opponents do not say that our law is to be followed; and yet we may boldly say, that they have none of divine origin to offer in its stead. The Messiah is acknowledgedly but an agent, even grant him to be a part of the Deity; and what right has he then to abrogate the old, and institute a new law? And even grant this also: still the ques-

tion recurs, where is the new code, where is the public legislation, where is the evident manifestation of divine glory, like the glorious descent on Sinai? The doctrines, in short, of the incarnation, of the vicarious atonement, and of the new religion in all its modifications, are all obnoxious to the objections just indicated; and although so briefly stated, yet the demonstrations and proofs drawn from Holy Writ, faithfully and honestly drawn, must convince every Israelite, and to these alone I address myself, that the doctrine of a plurality in the divine Author of all, is blasphemous; that the doctrine of an incarnation is incompatible with the nature of God as pronounced through the mouth of the prophets; that the doctrine of an appeasing offering being requisite to satisfy God, and to enable Him to save mankind, when otherwise He would not be able, is unsupported and contradicted by Scripture, since God always announces himself as the only Redeemer and Saviour, from whom all redemption proceeds, and that all beings act under Him and ruled by his guidance; and by inference as well as by direct argument we have arrived at the conclusion, that God is ONE and alone, without division, without similitude; incorporeal, therefore, untangeable, and immortal; that He has never delegated his power to any other being, and without this no other power equal to Him can exist; that He has never doomed man to utter hopelessness, but that He has established statutes and ordinances which, when observed, will lead to happiness, here and hereafter.—In illustration of this, we read further in Isaiah (xli. 4):

מי פעל ועשה קרא הדרות מראש אני ה' ראשון ואת  
אחרנים אני הוא : ישעיה מא' ד' :

“Who effected and did this? who called forth the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the latest, I am the same.”

These predicates and attributes belong but to the One, before whom walked our patriarch Abram, whom God called out from Ur in Chaldea, that he might become a shining light to those that dwelt in darkness; no other being there exists that shareth his glory, and none ever will be, O our God! who will rule

with Thee, none can ever exist to whom Thou canst be compared; for Thou alone art God, and Thine alone will ever be the dominion and rule over all.—But yet of thy glory and of thy wisdom Thou hast bestowed on man the work of thy hand; and willest that he should be happy by obeying thy precepts, and the children of Jacob Thou hast chosen to be thy beloved people; let then, we pray Thee, thy power be again displayed, and send Thou the anointed messenger, David thy servant, whom Thou hast ordained to effect by thy assistance the restoration of thy people, who look up to Thee in their captivity, and cry unto Thee in their affliction. May this speedily come to pass, even in our days and in our lives, and may then Judah be saved and Israel dwell securely. Amen!

Heshvan 7th. }  
 October 30th. } 5596.

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## DISCOURSE XLV.

### THE MESSIAH.

IN THY NAME may thy people be blessed, and may their sufferings be removed by thy mercy; and do Thou cause those that are captives in the whole world, thy earth, to be gathered together on thy holy mountain, to serve Thee there, according to the commands of thy law; and may thy servant be speedily sent to rule and guide them, as the shepherd governs his flock. Amen.

BRETHREN!

On the subject of Messiah, which was lately offered to your consideration, it was exhibited to you, that, according to the

doctrines which are obviously deducible from Scripture, the person promised to be sent is not to be a divinity, nor if he were, would it be necessary for him to atone for the sins of the world. This argument was considered necessary to prove, that there was no intention to predict the advent of a being whose nature should be differing from man's, and whose actions should have the effect of reconciling the indignant and offended Creator to his creatures. It will not be denied, that the idea of a god coming down full of love and compassion, and assuming a nature and appearance foreign to him to work an entire change in the regulation and economy of the world, is a highly poetical one; but, nevertheless, it cannot become a matter of faith, one to found our belief upon, if it at all clashes with the sublime truths of the holy law, which was given to us to be as it were the guide and instructor for every thing relating to the divine nature (if I may make use of so profane a word) and to the divine economy, and to the conduct of God towards man, the chief and best work of his hands. In no part of the canon of our Bible does it say, that a deity should be delegated, in no one verse is it taught in so many words that the Deity who spoke through the prophets would cause a division in Himself to ensue, and in no one passage does it say, that there can be no salvation except through the death of such a messenger.—The idea, in short, notwithstanding its poetical beauty, is no scriptural idea, but an invention of heathen poets, whose works teem full of reports of incarnations, and of bodily appearances of divinities on the earth, and of divisions of the gods, and of progenies and children of these gods, some of whom were classed among the immortals, others again among those liable to change and corruption.—We cannot deny, that many passages in the Bible have been tortured to show a delegation of the divine holiness to another; but still we do maintain that without unfair reasoning no one passage bears a direct and evident interpretation to this effect; and, moreover, we contend that, were it that such were the faith upon which our salvation depended, it would not have been indicated in obscure wording, but in a direct announcement like the first precept in the Decalogue: “I am the everlasting One, thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt,” where the evident words leave no

room for doubt or uncertainty. Much has been written and said on the subject of this our difference from other sects; but the books and arguments are not accessible to many, besides they are generally stated in too learned a way as to become generally useful; I therefore, propose to devote some little time to the elucidation of several texts, before I proceed to unfold our views of the nature and object of the Messiah.—At the same time, I must do myself the justice to state, that although I thus undertake to attack, to a certain extent, the opinions of the majority of the people among whom we live: it is not done for the sake of making a display of our own views to those entertaining contrary opinions, but solely to instruct those among us who may entertain doubts, or be not well informed, on this subject, as to what is generally thought thereof by Jews, and to enable them, in some measure, to give reasonable answers, when they are asked for the reasons of their faith. It is a long time already since these considerations were presented to my mind; but never, until now, could I resolve to speak of them in a public address. To be altogether silent—permit me to remark—would appear, as though we Jews had not the courage to speak of things pertaining to our religion in our own assemblies; now, although it is abhorrent to all correct sentiment to attack others, or to wound their feelings in so essential a point as religion: still would that cowardice be much more blameworthy which would prevent Jews from speaking of their own laws in their own assemblies, in a country, where equal rights are guaranteed to all the inhabitants by the constitution and the laws of the land. Whilst we, therefore, concede to every sect the right of temperately discussing any thing relating to their own and even to our persuasion: we also claim and have the same right; and, if temperately exercised, no one can, and no one ought, to complain. Complaisance and forbearance are, truly speaking, great virtues which ought to be strictly cultivated; but their exercise should never degrade them into the kindred vices of affected politeness and meanness; and better far would it be were our mouths stopped by the violent arm of arbitrary rule, than that we should surrender tamely to worldly expediency what we refused to yield amidst the heavy persecutions we had to en-

counter—I mean the right of honestly believing the truth and boldly expressing what we believe. And let me add, that if we once submit, and give up tacitly this precious right of expounding our laws according to our received opinions: the enemies of Judaism have achieved a victory for which they have so long striven in vain; as they have then succeeded to make the laws of God by degrees forgotten, from us, and the next step would then be of easy attainment; for, when our ordinances are forgotten, theirs will be easily substituted in their place, and Israel, which God in his mercy forbend, will have ceased to be a nation. But there lives that One above who will prevent such a calamity, and that time will never arrive which shall witness the quenching of the glorious light, which has been ordained the guiding star of all mankind!—I fear that I have said already too much; since no apology for the discussion proposed is necessary to justify myself towards any Israelite, and I doubt whether any can at all be looked for by one who does not believe with us. Let us, therefore, without further preface, proceed to the illustration of the various texts upon which our opponents rely as a justification of their doctrines; and I have only to remark, that I shall not go over the whole ground, but merely select a few of the most prominent, believing, that it will be easy for any one to explain the Bible-texts to himself, if he has been made acquainted with the interpretation of a few selected from various parts of Scripture.—Some persons have fancied that they could discover in the phraseology of the Bible an allusion to a plurality in the Deity; among the rest, the text in the first chapter of Genesis: “And God said: We will make man in our image, in our likeness, and he shall rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of heaven, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creeping things that move on the earth.” “And God said we will make man,” is alleged, refers to a plurality in the Deity, say father, son, and ghost, who consulted and agreed to make the creature called man after the image of God; first, in the nature and constitution of his soul, and also, measurably, of the body, since the son of god took the body of man; secondly, in his place and authority; and, lastly, in his purity and rectitude. That a construction of the verse



in question should at all be used to prove a plurality in the Deity is a matter of surprise; but surely a consultation and agreement in the persons, were any existing, of the Godhead, can in nowise be inferred. To the definition of the words "image and likeness" as just exhibited, which, by the way, was given in the very words of a work in great authority among the Nazarenes, we could make but little objection, except with regard to the body of man having been dignified by an assumption of it by a part of the Deity, which we deny as having taken place, and, consequently, cannot think it implied under the words "image and likeness."—It strikes me, that the whole difficulty of explaining the verse we have quoted, can be removed, if we consider, that the Hebrew, as well as every other language, I believe, has words which have a *plural* form, yet are, in their signification, *singular*. Now, in construing a word of this kind, the writer may employ the verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and nouns, referring to it, either in the singular, according to its signification, or in the plural, according to its form. The whole, then, resolves itself into a grammatical construction of a sentence; and if no rule of propriety is thereby violated, and if the meaning is not rendered ambiguous or uncertain, the singular and plural both are employed in Hebrew alternately, as can be shown by examples taken from the only remains of the Hebrew, which are found, as all know, in the Bible solely.—The term אֱלֹהִים, which is commonly rendered *God*, is one of this class of words, and has the appearance of a plural, though actually a singular. Many reasons and explanations have been given why the plural form should be employed to designate the Deity; but it must be observed that is not by any means the only name applied to God in our holy language, but is one of the many which have been given to Him, and is like them expressive of some particular quality inherent in Him. So we call Him אֵל שָׁרִי the All-sufficient, because He is able to accomplish every thing which He may desire; בּוֹרֵא or Créator, because He alone produced existence out of non-existence, a material world out of nothing; כֹּל יָכוֹל the Almighty, because his power is universal, and his kingdom extends over all; further אֵל God, or, more properly speaking, the Power, because to Him all power appertaineth, and all to

Him is accountable. Many other names, expressive of his glory, belong also to Him ; but it is foreign to our purpose to enumerate them, and we must therefore conclude the number by adding the last term by which He revealed himself to our forefathers, and particularly to Moses, the name which expresses his essence to be permanent, ever being, never ending ; profane lips, like ours, must not utter the ineffable word, but it declares God as the eternal One, who ever was, ever is, and ever will be, without change, without division. It will be perceived, from an inspection of the Bible, that not one of the names, just enumerated, is ever found in the plural either of termination or signification, but always in the singular, without a solitary exception. Now, it appears to me, if I dare to give an expression to my ideas, without having the support of any commentator known to me, that the word אלהים is the plural of אל in its signification of *power*, and should accordingly be rendered the *powers*, and as applied to God, He in whom all powers are centred. To prove the plausibility of this interpretation is perfectly easy ; for the word *elohim* very often is applied to men to denote *chief* or judge, either in singular or plural, and also to false deities, again either singular or plural. In fact, whenever the word God receives suffixes in Hebrew, the plural form is almost invariably adopted with but few exceptions. To those who are unacquainted with the Hebrew grammar I offer, as an explanation, that those words, which are termed in English *possessive* pronouns, or pronouns denoting possession, are expressed in Hebrew, not by entire words, but by letters or syllables attached to the end of the word to which they refer, and these so called suffixes are differently attached to the plural from the singular. I hope this brief explanation is sufficiently intelligible ; and assuming it to be so, let us continue the argument. The plural suffixes are used with the plural-looking *elohim*, even if denoting a single idol, as we read in the address of Jephtha, to the king of the Ammonites (Judges xi. 24) : “ Behold that which thy god אלהיך Kemosh gives thee to inherit, that only thou mayest possess, and that which the Lord our God has driven out before us, that even we will possess.” In this passage no one can say, with any show of reason, that the word אלהיך refers to any other than one idol,

since his name is mentioned, namely, Kemosh ; and when, in the second part of the verse, אלהינו is used, it certainly cannot mean any thing else save the *one* God, not a plurality, and refers therefore to the Lord Eternal, whom the Israelites call their God.—Without one word more added to what has just been said, the argument appears to me perfectly conclusive ; but we may carry the illustration, for the sake of greater clearness, a little farther. The plural, in connexion with the Deity, is used in but few other passages, the whole number amounting to but six,\* besides the one under consideration, as far as I can recollect at the present moment, and I very much doubt whether any more can be found ; and in explaining them we must be struck with the little authority they can give to a belief in a divided deity.—The first is in chap. iii. v. 22, of Genesis, immediately after the account of Adam's fall: “And (He) the Lord God said : Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil.” Here “like *one* of us” is employed to convey the idea that man had acquired a superior degree of knowledge of good and evil to what he had before. Immediately thereafter we read, that God placed angels, named cherubim, to guard the entrance of the garden, to prevent the re-entrance of man. Is it not now more than probable, that in the mighty assembly of his ministers, who, as the prophets say, surround his glory, the Almighty thus spoke : “Behold man has now become like one of us (here assembled) to distinguish between good and evil?” and it then means, that Adam had actually reached that knowledge which the serpent had foretold to Eve, saying : “And you will become like elohim (properly rendered divine beings or angels, to distinguish them from Adam or sons of earth,) knowing good and evil.” Adam and Eve had accordingly seen this truly verified, but, alas ! their innocence too had fled with their ignorance, and

\* Since writing the above, I have found at least one more example of the kind spoken of in the text (2 Samuel vii. 23), which however refers to an idol, or any thing acknowledged as god, and yet in the continuation the *pronoun* referring to it is used in the singular.—I do not recollect any more similar passages above referred to ; but I have no doubt, that, if any should be found, the explanations given in the text will be enough to explain them.

they had offended God by seeking to dive farther than his command had permitted them. The doctrine of the plurality you will see is nowise benefitted by this passage ; for acknowledging that it is after all, like the whole account of the temptation, awfully mysterious, since it refers to a state of things of which we can, from our altered state, form no conception: we may yet claim that our explanation bears the evident marks of orthodoxy, which can be further proved by a reference to the vision of Micaiah son Yimlah, which you can find in the twenty-second chap. of the 1st Kings, beginning with verse 19.

The second passage is also in Genesis, chap. xi. v. 7. Speaking of the building of the Babylonian tower, God is represented as saying : “ Come on, let *us* descend, and let us mix there their language, that one may not understand the speech of the other.” If the explanation of the last quoted passage has appeared reasonable, then this one must and ought to be similarly explained ; but after all it may be taken as a mere soliloquy of God, expressive of his intentions. But, if I may urge my views, I would respectfully refer to where God, in speaking immediately to Abraham of his intentions to subvert Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis xviii. 21), says: “ I will now descend and see,” where the singular is used, because the person addressed being mortal could not become a party in the transaction, nor be employed as the agent, and God therefore simply announced to him the intention He entertained of, as it were, descending unto the regions of the earth, and to investigate the reported misconduct of the cities of the plain. And when again we find God speaking in the heavenly council of his ministering seraphim (Isaiah vi. 8), we read : “ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying : Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? and I said, Here I am, do Thou send me.”—Has our interpretation been thus clearly established?—I hope so; but more amplification would show it better, yet I am admonished by the time already consumed not to dilate too largely, although the subject is, to me at least, so highly interesting.

The third instance is found again in Genesis, xx. 13, where Abraham, speaks of God having caused him to wander away from his father’s house, and uses the verb in plural, which can

be justified on the ground laid down, that a noun having a plural termination, though a singular meaning, may have the verb agreeing with it, either according to the termination or the meaning; and if this is not satisfactory, we may say that Abraham, perhaps, in addressing a heathen king who knew not exactly the true worship, used the language customary in the country, without thereby intending to convey the idea of a plurality in the Deity. At all events, any arguments from this verse in favour of such a doctrine, must be too far-fetched to bear any authority whatever.

The fourth example is also in Genesis, in the history of Jacob, chap. xxxv. 7: "And he built there an altar, and he called the place, 'The God of Bethel,' for there had appeared to him the *elohim*, when he fled before his brother." Here the word *elohim* is again employed as a plural; still, this passage, of all yet quoted the most favourable to our opponents, will be found, upon examination, to afford them no tenable ground. For, upon referring to the event alluded to, we read in the account of Jacob's dream (Genesis xxviii. v. 12): "And he dreamt, and behold a ladder was standing on the earth, and its top was reaching heavenward, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." What then did Jacob see in his dream at Bethel, when he fled before his brother—a multitude, or one being only?—a multitude surely;—but what constituted this multitude, divinities or creatures?—creatures surely although of the highest order; and they were sent by God to comfort him in his trouble, when sleep had weighed down his eyelids, whilst he was reposing on the flinty rock for a pillow; and among this host of ministers also appeared the Creator, and in his own glory comforted and assured his servant by promising him his protection. But does *elohim* mean angels? certainly, for after the angel had disappeared from the eyes of Manoah and his wife, the former said: "We must die, for we have seen an *elohim*," meaning an angelic being, for immediately before we are told: "Then knew Manoah that he was an angel of the Lord." And Manoah's wife too better informed perhaps, at all events better judging, answered: "If the Lord had wished to slay us He would not have accepted from our hand burnt and meat offering, and would not have let us see all this, nor

at this time have suffered us to hear like that we have heard.” (Judges xiii. 21–23.) The explanation here attempted is perfectly rational, and will, I trust, be enough to clear away the seeming difficulty of this passage, and the plural is then only used to refer to the multitude of angels that appeared to Jacob in his dream.

The fifth example is found in Joshua xxiv. 19, and constitutes a part of the address of this great leader to the Israelites before his death. He says: “You may not be able to serve the Lord, for He is the holy Gods.” I have rendered the words *Elohim kedoshim* literally, as though they referred actually to a plural number; but who does not see that the singular “*He is*” is fatal to the assumption of the idea of a plurality being actually entertained? and, to give a rational commentary, we must say, that Joshua employed again the grammatical license of considering the word *elohim* both according to its nature and appearance, and therefore he uses the adjective in the plural to agree with the latter, and the pronoun in the singular to refer to the former.

The sixth example we have in Isaiah vi, and has already been explained, and I hope that conviction has been wrought to demonstrate, that no reliance whatever can be placed upon an argument founded upon few plural constructions of the word *Elohim*, especially as the doctrine plainly taught, says that God our God (*Elohim*) is ONE.—In addition to the foregoing, it must be borne in mind, that there are a number of other words in Hebrew (like in most other languages, as has been mentioned already) that are used as plurals, although having singular meanings, among which we may enumerate נעורים *face*, נעורים youth, מים *water*, שמים *heaven*, and many others which, having no singular form, are always construed as plurals, although often applied to individual things. The argument which has been drawn from the verse quoted from the first chapter of Genesis, therefore, appears so weak upon a calm review, as hardly to merit a refutation; but as it is so constantly repeated and pressed on our view, I hope the time will not be considered by you, my brethren, as misspent, which has been devoted to its overthrow. In dismissing this subject for the present I have only to add, that but little exception would ever have been

taken to the verse "Let us make man," had it not been, that in accordance with the doctrines of the heathens the plurality of the deity had been promulgated by a people deriving their faith and their laws from our holy code, only with such exceptions as would tend to make them more pleasant and easy to the larger mass of Adam's descendants, who might not wish to be bound down by abstract ideas and a multiplicity of ceremonial observances.—And of all the abstract tenets of our Heaven-born religion, against which the heathens most strove, and which was ever the most unintelligible to their besotted minds, the belief in one God, undivided and immutable, must be pre-eminently distinguished; since the very simplicity of this faith was to them quite incomprehensible; for there, when their priests most pretended to mysteries and secrecy, our teachers were candid and open; hence those of our nation, who brought a reformed religion to these heathen, retained a multiplicity of the deity, whilst in conformity with their own belief they promulgated the worship of the one God.

The idea of a saving redeemer to die for the sins of the world, the Nazarenes maintain, is taught in Genesis iii. 15, where we read as a continuation of the curse upon the serpent: "And enmity I will put between thee and between the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thee in the head, and thou shalt bite his heel." This verse is so explained to favour the idea of the atonement so often already alluded to: "Enmity should arise between Satan or the devil, who had entered the body of the serpent to tempt Eve, and between the woman and her race; still the seed of the woman, meaning the god-man, should ultimately overcome the power of Satan, but he should thereby suffer the loss of his material life, which is represented under the words of "he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bite his heels."—This explanation is according to the opinion entertained by a vast majority of the followers of the new creed; a majority I say, for there is among them a great multitude who differ very widely in their doctrines from the majority. But it needs not much sagacity to see, that this mode of commenting would lead to making the Bible-text mean any thing or nothing. If it is offered as a mere accommodation of certain views to this or any other text, we can

have but small objection to make ; for then it would amount to no more than seeking a parallel only in words whose obvious meaning is something very different ; and such fanciful construction can in nowise serve as argument.—But, if the doctrines so fancifully supported are forced upon us as of fundamental importance, and as proven by the holy Text: then, indeed we must solemnly protest against any such assumption.—It must however be evident, that the curse was levelled against the veritable serpent, the so called snake, which in truth now has the qualities denounced in the curse. How this serpent could have spoken and tempted our first parents is indeed more than, I believe, any man is able to tell precisely, and we must reckon the whole account amongst those mysteries into which our research cannot fully penetrate. But we have the Bible as warrant for believing, that allured in an extraordinary manner, and greatly prompted by curiosity, Eve tasted the forbidden fruit, and Adam by her tempted, sinned with her. In his indignation, coupled with mercy, the Almighty called our parents, who had forfeited their life, to an account for their misconduct, and ordained their punishment, and also that of their original tempter. Before their sin there was no death, and the lion slew therefore not the innocent steer, the wolf devoured not the harmless lamb, the kite's destructive talons dealt not death to the hen and her brood, not in circling eddies pursued his prey the eagle, nor in the cleft of the barren rock lay the coils of the poisonous viper. But sin changed the harmony of nature; and the beasts of the field broke their truce with man, and those that had hitherto been harmless and playful now strode abroad with the eager desire for slaughter, armed with the voracious mouth, with the sharpened talon, or with the destroying, withering fang; and thus the former companions, and among them the tempting, glowing, beautiful serpent, became the enemies and terror of man. Still, though hated, his dominion was not to cease over God's creation, and, therefore, power was left him to crush the serpent's head, literally crush it, although the latter was armed for deadly strife. Where in this is there any evident allusion to a redeeming Messiah? We pause for an answer. Now, we will even grant, that in this denunciation of the tempter God had an allusion



to the power of man over sin; still, what reference can that have to the Nazarene doctrine of a redeemer, who is to be both god and man?—And to illustrate, that our view is supported by other texts in the Bible, and that it is sin only which exposes us to the enmity of the beasts of the field, but that virtue will remove the danger, let us refer to the sublime Psalm, written by the prophet Moses, and the man who best knew the ways of God with man. It is in the Psalm xci. 10–13, we read: “No evil can befall thee, and no plague can approach thy tent. For his angels He commands concerning thee to guard thee in all thy ways. On hands they must bear thee, that no stone may hurt thy foot. On leopard and adder thou canst tread, tread down the lion’s whelp and serpent.” It is thus seen that sin arms nature against us, and by virtue we obtain peace; and this is the doctrine which is taught also in Gen. iii. 15.

The elucidation of these two points has unexpectedly detained us so long, that for to-day it will not be practicable to go through the whole important subjects in dispute, and time, therefore, is left us to speak of but one more.—In the blessing given to Abram, when God ordered him to leave his father’s house, we read among others (Genesis xii. 3) the following: “And I will bless those that bless thee, and him that curses thee, I will curse, and through thee all families of the earth shall be blest.” Were any one to read this annunciation of happiness for the first time, he never would imagine that any other than the Patriarch himself is spoken of, and those immediately connected with him by family descent. But no, this simple and obvious mode of commenting on the Text, is not satisfactory to our Nazarene interpreters, and they again make this passage also subservient to an announcement of the coming of their messiah. They accordingly say: “That this crowning blessing refers to the messiah the divinity, 1, in whom only all that are blessed are blessed; 2, in whom all that believe, of whatever family they may be, are blessed; 3, in whom some of all nations are blessed; 4, since there are some blessings, such as the new law propagated under his name, which are common to all mankind.” I again extract almost *verbatim*, from the book of high authority already referred to, and consequently the argument is fairly stated. Now we have no ob-

jection to admit that the Messiah whom we expect is to be the crowning blessing, perhaps he also may have been alluded to in the promise made to Abraham, as also our sages teach: "The Messiah's name was created before this earth was made;" but that, nevertheless, Abram himself and all Israel his descendants are at least included, is evident, *first*, from the very context of which the verse quoted makes a part; *secondly*, from the blessing given to Isaac: "And I will multiply thy descendants like the stars of heaven, and I will give to thy descendants all these lands; and they shall bless themselves in (or through) thy descendants all the nations of the earth (Gen. xxvi. 4); and *lastly*, from the portion read this day, as the day's lecture :

וְהָיָה זֶרַעַךְ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרֻצְתָּ יָמָה וּקְדָמָה וּצְפֹנָה  
וּנְגִבָה וּנְבָרְכֶוּ בְךָ כָּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה וּבוֹרְעֶיךָ : בְּרֵא' כה' יד' :

"And thy descendants shall be as numerous as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread out to the East, the West, the North, and the South, and in thee and in thy seed all the families of the earth shall be blest."

Gen. xxviii. 14.

Can any words more plainly say, that the seed spoken of shall not be only one individual, but a people, a numerous people, who shall proclaim the glory of God in the heathens' lands? And who are this people? who but the children in the flesh, as well as spirit, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom God made his covenant known?—True, these descendants now are despised, their countenance is marred, their wisdom slighted; but who knows not that arrive will that bright day, when indeed their light will shine, when from them teachers will go out and proclaim God's name to the far islands of the sea?—The time is delayed, because of our sins, but come it will, and then God will be declared One, and his name will be One.

Do Thou our Father, hasten this time, for to Thee are our eyes directed; and do Thou comfort those that mourn for their sins, and seek salvation in Thee only, who art our Father, King, and Redeemer! Amen.

Kislev 6th. }  
Nov. 26th. } 5596.

## DISCOURSE XLVI.

## THE MESSIAH.

REMEMBER US, O Lord ! in thy kindness, and have mercy upon us the erring and scattered flock, and raise unto us a shepherd, who shall guide us in thy holy name; and send unto us a prophet who shall again instruct us of thy will. And cause us all to behold thy glory, when Thou again wilt dwell before our eyes in Jerusalem, thy holy city, as in days of old and as in years of former times. Amen.

## BRETHREN !

If one were to form his ideas of prophecy from the vague assertions which are constantly hazarded respecting it: he would assuredly never arrive at any satisfactory knowledge concerning this great fund of divine wisdom, which God in his kindness transmitted to us through a long succession of holy and inspired men, who went out, and spoke, and wrought awful things, by and through his sacred name and power. To believe every thing, therefore, which is alleged to be founded on prophecy would be to believe absurdities and contradictions innumerable; for the recklessness of false interpreters has dared to invade even this sanctuary of God and to fortify their errors and falsities by arguments deduced therefrom. It is accordingly the manifest duty of every Israelite, who truly confides in the faith in which his forefathers believed, lived, suffered, and died, to arrive at a certain and fixed knowledge of the dogmas on which his belief is founded, and to endeavour to attain a sufficient understanding of the sacred Text, to be able at one glance to distinguish the false from the true, the evil from the good, the absurd from the reasonable; in short, ignorance of his religion and its tenets is, in a Jew, a positive crime, which nothing but an inability to arrive at knowledge can in the least

excuse. And in the same measure as knowledge derivable from instruction is difficult of access, he is bound to search the Scriptures for himself, and, with an humble diffidence in his own power of discernment, to proceed upon the principles which have been handed down to us, and which are so widely and universally disseminated, that hardly any one, called an Israelite, can be absolutely ignorant of the whole of them, unless he never had enjoyed the blessings of converse and intercourse with his brethren in faith.—It being thus admitted, that every one ought to learn, it follows as a natural consequence, that every one, capable of teaching, should endeavour to disseminate the knowledge that is within him, to propagate as far as in him lies, and to perpetuate to the extent of his abilities, the knowledge and the love of the truth, which is at last the same with the knowledge and love of God, since the God to whom Israel bend in submission, since the Lord whom we worship, is Himself the truth. In furtherance of this object let us revert to the exposition of prophecies applied by our opponents to fortify their doctrines of the Messiah in opposition to ours. A variety of passages referring to the alleged plurality of the deity and to a saving redeemer have already been expounded, and it has been shown that no literal explanation will warrant the doctrines drawn from them, and a fanciful commentary can never, and ought never, to be taken, or even urged as argument. The number of similar passages being very great, it would no doubt be useful to go over the whole ground; but it is time that a connected view should be concisely exhibited, and the subject speedily closed; I am therefore compelled to select but a few more, and leave the remainder for some future and more fitting opportunity. To proceed however without further preface, I must draw your attention to the fact that the Nazarenes of every degree have entertained as a favourite notion, that the time of the advent of the Messiah was so distinctly pointed out, that his appearance at a certain stated and fixed period was absolutely necessary to verify the predictions relating to him.—Predictions, therefore, have been selected, and a multitude of arguments have been adduced to prove, that they have been fulfilled to the letter at a certain given period in by-gone times.—One of the most favourite of this kind is found in Genesis xlix. 10:

לא יסור שבט מיהודה ומחקק מנן רגליו עד כי יבא  
 שילה ולו יקהת עמים : בראשית מט' :

which is rendered:

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The interpretation of this translation is so given by the Nazarenes: The kingdom when once given to Judah, which was accomplished in the person of David, son of Jesse, from Bethlehem, should never depart from the tribe of Judah or from those immediately connected with it, till the time that Shiloh shall come, to whom the nations shall assemble; but immediately before his coming the kingdom should cease, which, it is said further, was accomplished at the accession of Herod, of Edumean descent, at the downfall of Hyrcanus the Second, the last of the Asmonean princes. And very often indeed has this prophecy of Jacob been triumphantly advanced, together with the assertion, that, since the Israelitish kingdom is extinct, therefore the Messiah must have come.—But in answer to this bold affirmation, even allowing that there should be no error in the common Bible-translation as adopted by all Nazarenes, we must as boldly maintain that the alleged fulfilment tallies in nowise with the Text; and, strange as it may appear, that an assertion of so many learned and philosophic men should be totally erroneous, the fact is nevertheless so. In the first place, if Jacob meant to say, that Judah's descendants should *always* be the chiefs of the nation of Israel, then the prophecy never was fulfilled; for, up to the time of David, at least six hundred years from Jacob's departure, there was no pre-eminent prince from Judah's tribe. But grant that the meaning should be, that from the commencement of the kingdom it should never cease till the coming of the Messiah: then he ought to have come, according to the most moderate calculation, four hundred years before the alleged advent, or according to some chronologists, six hundred years. For, when Zedekiah was captured by the Chaldeans after his flight from Jerusalem, the kingdom of Judah actually ceased; and no history that I know of has left us any record, that any other king from that family ever reigned, even for one single day, over the restored Jews, including Judah

Benjamin, and Levi, much less over the never hitherto restored kingdom of Israel. And to say, that the rule of satraps under the Persian tutelage and dominion can be called the wielding of the sceptre implied in the prophecy, is evidently using a standard of criticism not applicable to Scripture; and, further, to say that the kingdom of the Asmonean princes, who were descendants of Aaron, and consequently not belonging to the tribe of Judah, was also in accordance with the prophecy, is perfectly absurd, for the blessing was addressed to Judah only and not to Levi inclusive, and therefore it is not possible to suppose that the fulfilment in the persons of Levi's descendants could at all verify the prediction with regard to Judah. And for that matter, since Herod was a professing Jew, as nearly all the people called Edumeans were in those days: he might have been included in the prediction according to the above latitudinarian exposition (for, according to our laws, the proselyte is equal with the native son of Israel,) if such an explanation had suited the Nazarene creed. If then this prophecy meant that Messiah must come as soon as Judah's sceptre be broken, Zedekiah's flight ought to have been the time; and therefore, if the argument is good against our hopes of a coming Messiah, it is good also against the belief of those differing from us, as has been amply shown, and I doubt whether evasions ever so subtle will be able to countervail the plain reasoning just exhibited. But, it is likely, highly likely, that the common version is incorrect, and accordingly a translation has been given by various persons of our people and those agreeing with them, which gives the prophecy quite a different appearance, and it is then perfectly reconcileable both to prophecy and history. The difference depends upon the meaning of the two particles  $\text{כִּי}$   $\text{וְ}$  which when united as one compound mean *until that*; but  $\text{וְ}$  by itself is often applied to designate eternity, and should then be rendered with *for ever*; and  $\text{כִּי}$  by itself means *because, for, inasmuch*, or, in short, is a particle denoting the consequence of an antecedent sentence. If then we sever these words and connect one with the first, and the other with the second part of the verse, it should be rendered thus: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, and the lawgiver not from between his feet (that is, from his de-

scendants) for ever, inasmuch as the Shiloh shall come, and to him shall be the assemblage of the nations." If this interpretation is correct, and it is certainly perfectly reconcilable to the Hebrew\* idiom : Jacob meant to say, that Judah should be the chief tribe, which indeed it was, both in the number and the bravery of its men ; that from it should go out the rulers of the nation ; and that, if ever through the means of transgressions the kingdom should be removed for a time, the removal should not be everlasting ; for the king Messiah should arise, to whom all nations are to assemble to learn of him the laws of God, in which they are to walk, and which they are all ultimately to obey. It would from this appear, that the chief excellence which Judah was to have above his brothers, over Reuben, because he had grievously sinned, and over Simeon and Levi, because by their headstrong violence they had grieved their father and done injustice to others, and over the others because over them he had the right of prior birth, was to consist in the descent of the Messiah from his family, in whom the kingdom and the legislation were for ever to remain, and who was to be the harbinger of peace and knowledge to all mankind. We merely wish to ask, has such a personage, uniting these qualities, ever been known on earth ? and where then is the hopelessness which the world says is ours in looking forward for his coming ?

Having said thus much already in elucidation of this verse, it is with extreme diffidence that I venture to offer views of my own on the subject, especially as I am ignorant whether I am supported in them by others or not.—But trusting that the matter has also a considerable share of interest for you, my brethren, I will even continue, and throw myself on your indulgence for detaining you longer on this point, than may seem at first sight necessary. In looking over the Scriptures with reference to the doctrines of the Messiah, I have been so struck with the extreme unity of agreement of the various prophets, as to amount to astonishment. Much as I had read before, often as I had studied the oracles of our faith : I yet

\* The accent on  $\gamma$  is a *disjunctive*, which would evidently imply, that, according so the Massoratist, it is not connected with the word  $\delta$ .

found new cause for admiration over the extreme beauty and harmony discoverable in the scheme of revelation which we possess, and I was filled with thankfulness, that we have been permitted to inherit such a store of rich blessings, full of wisdom and consolation. Long before our times, said a sacred singer : " Had not thy law been my entertainment, I long since would have perished in my misery ;" and well may Israel collectively say now what the holy seer exclaimed in by-gone days, when the spirit of prophecy was yet rife on earth. In judging therefore of any one passage which may be presented to us, we must not judge of it as one isolated sentence, but as a part of a great scheme, with which it must, and doubtlessly does, agree. If then we even admit, that the received version of the Nazarenes is correct, it certainly will not militate against our religion. For, the verse in question contains a two-fold promise ; of the *sceptre*, and the *law-giver*, or rather *law-dispenser*. It would accordingly mean, that both, the kingdom and the dispensation of the divine law, should never be at the same time taken from Judah's descendants, up to the time when Messiah should hold universal dominion over the earth. And thus the kingdom conferred on Judah shall never cease ; and though Judah's immediate descendants did not at once hold the sway, yet at a later period David was chosen, and in him began the commencement of the fulfilment ; and with regard to the continuance thereof after a suspension (understand a suspension, but not an abolition) of the kingdom we have an ample account in the book of the prophecies of Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived during the reigns of the latter kings of Judah, when the wickedness of the people had rendered them ripe for destruction ; he was accordingly deputed to predict the death or downfall of three kings : Jehojakim, Jochoniah, and Zedekiah, through the king of the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar. After stating the utter subversion of the kingdom of Judah, and testifying against Jochoniah that none of his descendants should ever rule over the land of Israel : he continues in chap. xxxiii. 7, as follows : " And I will bring back the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel, and build them up as at first." And in verse 14, we read in continuation : " Behold days will come, saith the Lord, when I will fulfil this good word which I have



spoken over the house of Israel and over the house of Judah. In those days, and in that time, I will let sprout to David the sprout of righteousness, and he shall exercise justice and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety ; and this is the name which He will call her : ' The Lord is our righteousness.' For thus saith the Lord, it shall not be cut off to David a man sitting on the throne of the house of Israel. And to the priests the Levites, there shall not be cut off a man before me, who bringeth burnt-offerings, and sacrificeth meat-offering, and prepareth sacrifices, all the days." In the same manner spoke Hosea, iii. 4-5 : " For, many days shall the children of Israel dwell without king, without chief, without sacrifice or altar, without ephod or oracle. After this, however, shall the sons of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king ; and they will adhere to the Lord and to his goodness in fear, in the latter days." Also to David was said by Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel vii. 16) : " But thy house and thy kingdom shall stand for ever, thy throne shall be firm for ever." These extracts will give us a convincing commentary on Jacob's prophecy, and all tend to show that the suspension of the kingdom during the long-endured captivity does not indicate that the reign of Judah is over ; on the contrary that the time will come, when the captives of Judah and Israel will all be gathered, and over them shall rule the king David ; and to quiet the fears which some might entertain at the length of the captivity and the threatened extinction of David's line, the Lord promised that never should that time arrive, when there should be wanting a man to David, capable of holding sway, for He distinctly stated, at the very time that both kingdom and temple ceased, when both chief and priest were banished, that Aaron no less than David should always be blessed with capable successors, ready and able to tread in their fathers' footsteps. Although, therefore, the regular tables of descent have been lost in the long course of persecutions: there are yet numbers who boast of a descent from David, and thousands there are, whom the universal voice of Israel hails as the offspring of Aaron, the Lord's anointed, and at all festivals the priestly blessings are dispensed by those who are sanctified with the commands given to the

father of all the priests.—And lastly, with regard to the lawgivers and those to whom the law of God is familiar, we may simply state, that at no time has the lawgiver been removed from the feet of Judah ; for never yet was that time, when the law had not its friends, cultivators, and expounders ; and in the same spirit spoke Isaiah, lix. 21 : “ And my covenant with them is this, saith the Lord : My spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, and out of the mouth of thy children, and out of the mouth of thy children’s children, saith the Lord, from now and for ever.” This prediction has certainly been accomplished ; and more yet, the descendants of Judah are at the present moment constituting the greatest part of the Jews, and moreover the descendants of David are not extinct ; further the suspension of the kingly rule was according to the prophecies, and to avenge the many crimes of the Israelites ; what contradiction does our belief then offer to the prophecy of Jacob ? or rather are not our hope, and our belief, and the foretelling of our prophets of a later period confirmatory of, and conformable to, and best explaining, the closing inspiration of the dying Israel?—Assuredly, brethren, and it requires a hardihood, not very enviable in the possessor, to assert, that we are feeding on a vain hope and indulging a fruitless longing.—On the contrary, our trust is firmly placed—placed on the word of Him who does not err, and all whose ways are just and true !

Having dismissed this subject, although much could have been added which would have stronger confirmed our views of a redeemer yet to come : we will now turn to chapter xviii. of Deuteronomy, beginning at verse 14.—We read there as follows : “ For those nations, which thou shalt drive out, listen unto observers of time and diviners ; but as for thee, the Lord thy God has not suffered thee to do the like. A prophet from among thyself, from thy own brethren, like unto me, will raise unto thee the Lord thy God, to him ye shall hearken.” When we consider to whom Moses spoke, and what he knew himself to be : it is wonderful, and surpassing strange, how any one could apply so plain a passage, not to a prophet, but to a redeeming Messiah. And more wonderful still it is, that the Nazarenes of every shade and complexion refer to it, as a

convincing argument, in favour of their assumed theory. To enable you however to judge of the fairness of the interpretation, adopted by the people referred to, I will now lay before you an abstract of the favourite work,\* already spoken of on a former occasion. These are the words: "Some think it is the promise of a succession of prophets, that should for many ages be kept up in Israel.—These prophets were like unto Moses, though far inferior to him, Deut. xxxiv. 10.—Whether a succession of prophets be included in this promise or not, we are sure that it is primarily intended as a promise of Messiah, and it is the clearest promise of him that is in all the law of Moses."—"Observe," continues this writer, "what it is, that is here promised concerning Messiah; what God promised Moses at Mount Sinai, which he relates, verse 18, which he promised the people, verse 15, in God's name; [1] That there should come a prophet, great above all the prophets, by whom God would make known himself and his will to the children of men, more fully and clearly than ever he had done before. He is *the light of the world*, as prophecy was of the Jewish church. [2] That God would *raise him up from the midst of them*. In his birth he should be one of that nation. In his resurrection he should be *raised up at Jerusalem*, and from thence his doctrine should go forth to all the world.—[3] That he should be a prophet like unto Moses, only as much above him, as the other prophets came short of him.—[4] That God would *put his words in his mouth*, verse 18. What messages God had to send to the children of men, he would send by him, and give him full instructions what to say and do as a prophet."—It is needless to extract any further, having in the foregoing exhibited the entire strength of the argument. Now, I am unable to perceive what we can lose by even admitting the construction thus falsely placed on Moses's prophecy; for granting it perfectly correct and legitimate, we might still say, and aver, that we expected the fulfilment as yet to come. But, much as we might gladly refer this annunciation to the great messenger, to whose coming Israel has ever looked forward with hope and with prayer: candour and truth

\* Matthew Henry's Commentaries.

compel us to discard such an explanation ; since the whole context plainly shows, that by the successors of Moses are understood those men, who promulgated, after the great teacher's demise, the law and knowledge of God, and to no one else. What was it the Israelites had asked at Horeb ? It was that, not desiring any more to see themselves the glory of God evidently revealed, fearing to die in case a public legislation, like that on Sinai, were repeated,—they wished for a mediator to announce to them in future the will of God, and that they would be willing to obey the commands thus given through an agent, as much as those announced by God himself. God having once given them in his honour and glory the standard of the *ten precepts*, upon which He wished to found the entire code of laws He intended promulgating, was satisfied with this request ; He ordered, therefore, the people to return home to their usual occupations, but told Moses to remain on the mount, to be further instructed of the ways and will of his Maker. What, now, was the request of Israel ? not for a redeemer to save their souls, or to go abroad to give light unto the heathens, not for a mediator to die for their sins and to atone for the sin of Adam ; but simply for one or more persons, human beings, to let them know what was God's wish and will. In granting them this reasonable request, the answer ought evidently be like the question ; and consequently God granted what the people asked : they asked for a teacher, and a teacher was vouchsafed. Moses, the first prophet in rank and holiness, was the first deputed, and not to leave the flock without a shepherd, successors in the prophetic calling were promised ; and not only promised, but also sent, to further speak, exhort, teach, and admonish in the name of the King of kings, the God of Israel. And thus there were the warrior Joshua, valiant and true ; the righteous Samuel, who judged the people after the manner of Moses ; the king David who never forgot, even when sunk through sin, to return with prayer to his offended Maker ; and after him Elijah who never suffered the pangs of earth's dissolution ; the inspired Elisha who poured water on Elijah's hands ; Isaiah whose greatness of endowment, fervour of piety, and high descent, alike mark him eminent among the holy of the earth ; again the ardent Jeremiah, the man

of sorrow, whose eyes beheld, in the desolation of the holy city, what Moses already had foreseen ; and Malachi too, the last among these preachers, who again exhorted the people of the second temple to remain steadfast in the law given through Moses ; besides numerous others, who all spoke in conformity with the law given through the father of all the prophets. And therefore we read in continuation : “And it shall be, the man who does not hearken to my words which he may speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who shall be wicked enough to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, this prophet shall die.”—Moses therefore evidently speaks of messenger-prophets who, being men, may be liable to be sinful, and not of a divinity who from his very nature should, in reason, be exempt from sin and falsehood. Besides we may boldly challenge the supporters of the above argument to produce that passage, where it is said that a prophet greater than Moses was to be looked for ? on the contrary it does appear from the whole tenor of revelation that Moses was absolutely to be, and for ever, the greatest of his brethren, as it is his law, or rather the law called by his name, and given through his agency, which is to be the standard of the truth or falsehood of any prophet. And even Messiah himself, were he to appear this instant among us, and were he to declare in so many words: “The son of man is lord even over the Sabbath-day,” or “Eat, for what I have declared clean do thou not call unclean,” we would be compelled to disobey, for we should have to look on such an announcement as a temptation purposely put in our way, by which we may be tried : “Whether we love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul” (compare with Deut. xiii. 4). No! no prophet can of his own account, not even by a direct message, abrogate any part of the law or add any new precept to the same ; for the law having been publicly given, and therefore not resting for confirmation on any miracles wrought, cannot be abolished, except by an equally public act of God, similar to the descent on Sinai, and no evidence short of this ought ever to satisfy us.—Now it will be apparent that, when

Moses speaks of a prophet like himself, he means one who is to announce his mission, like he himself was wont to do, with 'כה אמר ה' "Thus speaketh the Lord;" this can only apply to man and not to the Deity. Besides we also contend, that the whole passage from the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy under question must refer to one class of persons, as we cannot discover any break or want of connection in the whole message; if then the first part refers to the Messiah, the latter part must likewise do the same; and can it be believed, that the command should be to slay the Messiah, in case he should speak falsely in the name of God? can it be possible that of one so highly endowed it could be presumed that he should predict what would never happen? The absurdity of an affirmative to these simple questions is too clear to require any further discussion; and consequently the passage does not speak of one man but of an entire class, such, as said already, were to be, and actually did, make their appearance on earth; and the phrase *like me*, does not then absolutely imply *equals* with Moses, but only persons deputed in a similar manner to speak a message in God's name, and protected by Him, and instructed by Him. The prophetic office being thus established it was natural enough that wicked men would at times speak falsely in the name of God; and tests were therefore established by which the truth or falsehood of prophecy could be established.—For a long period did these prophets follow each other in regular succession, till the scheme of revelation was completed; for Moses, let it be understood, was the instrument of the law, and consequently in teaching all the duties was by no means to write down all the religious truths and doctrines. The last was accomplished more and more by every succeeding prophet, till the whole was finished by Malachi; after him the prophecy ceased, or rather was suspended, and in him we see the last spark of holy fire yet illuminating the earth, before its light was hid for a long period, after the announcement of the Lamentations: "Her prophets also found no revelation from the Lord." But we are promised that the time will come, when God will pour out his spirit over all flesh, when our maidens and our youths will again receive the spirit of prophecy, and when again the glory of God will be revealed as of old, (see Joel iii. 1.) and

then indeed will be again fulfilled the promise made to Moses: "A prophet the Lord thy God will raise up to thee from among thy brethren, like unto me, him ye shall obey."

O Lord, do Thou accomplish this speedily, and may we in our days see thy glory, and rejoice in thy salvation! Amen.

Tebeth 11th. }  
January 1st. } 5596.

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## DISCOURSE XLVII.

### THE MESSIAH.

O OUR GOD, and God of our fathers! in thy just indignation Thou didst in former times hurl us out of our inheritance because of our sins; and Thou hast since then often caused us to pass through fire and through water, and given us rulers severe and cruel, that we might be taught the difference between serving Thee, the merciful and holy One, and of submitting to the yoke of oppressors and enemies, whom our transgressions placed over our heads. And long has the captivity pressed down our spirit, and we have remained dumb like the sheep before her shearers; we have become an object of derision and of contempt to nations that are strangers to thy worship, and we have been plundered by those who not yet have learnt thy service. But by thy holy name Thou hast sworn that not for ever should thy anger last, and that Thou wouldst at one time remember the captives of Israel, and restore them to their land; and that again vineyards should be planted, and fields tilled, in the deserted hills and wasted plains. O may it then be thy will soon to fulfil the blissful promise, and may the heart of thy servants be gladdened, by the mercies which Thou wilt display

among them, so that all nations may exclaim : “ Happy the people to whom the like has happened, happy the people, whose God is the eternal Lord.” Amen.

### BRETHREN !

In reviewing the history of the world we must discover, that out of every apparent evil some permanent good is produced, and if even individual suffering should be the consequence, a public benefit will generally ensue, apparent even to our own views, to the imperfect vision of men, who cannot thoroughly understand the reason and connection of things. This being admitted, and who can doubt it?—it is absolutely necessary to believe, that every thing that occurs must be beneficial, or in other words, that every occurrence will be directed to a beneficial end by the Disposer of all.—If even then we see one nation disappear and another spring up from the ruins of the other’s greatness, we should not complain of the apparent evil ; for we may rest assured, that the former having fulfilled the circle of its usefulness, the new has taken its place as one better calculated to lead the way in the measure of improvement which the world requires.—It thus happened, that Egypt flourished for a while, nay, Jacob went down there to fulfil his destiny of becoming *the* great nation, and amid his powerful and civilized rulers he and his family grew up into a people mighty and distinguished. And when the Egyptians oppressed the strangers whom they had received as friends, God’s power was displayed, and midst avenging judgments Israel was freed from Egyptian thraldom. Still, Egypt was permitted to rule, even as the instrument of punishment to the Israelites ; but at length it fell before the northern warrior Nebuchadnezzar, who had trampled down the kingdoms and states of Central Asia. He swept like a whirlwind over the world, and his path was over ruins of empires and the wreck of cities, and even the holy temple was given into his hands, and he broke the walls of Jerusalem, and led the people captives unto Babylon.—He had fulfilled his mission : when he was made to feel the awful greatness of the Lord, and was taught wisdom from the mouth of God’s servant, and convinced that he had been but an agent in a great work, the work of regeneration, constantly progress-



ing to a fulfilment.—Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom succumbed to Cyrus the Persian, and the Israelites were again permitted to dwell in their former dwelling-places; and again was seen the spectacle of a powerful nation ruling for a while over extensive lands, till their doom was hastened by cruelty and wickedness, and the consequent moral and physical degradation; and the Grecian Alexander, as it were, brushed away the tottering throne of Darius III., the last ruler of Persia of the successors of the great Cyrus.—A new period seemed now to open, a new era appeared to greet the world; refinement chased away barbarism; the elegant arts and sciences supplanted rudeness and ignorance; and towns arose where elegance and luxury hitherto almost unknown became universal. But all this outward elegance, this tinsel beauty, was weakness itself, it lacked a soul, there was not the life of holy truth in all the fabric, and it tumbled and was frittered away by the iron arm of Roman conquest; and the crazy building of a vainglorious philosophy, the gaudy show of enervating sensuality, sunk ingloriously before the merciless children of conquest that swarmed in numberless legions from the shores of the beautiful Italy. Thus was transferred the seat of empire from the Nile to the shores of the insignificant Tiber, and Rome was hailed the mistress of the world.—And Judea too fell beneath the resistless power, and the Jewish leaders were carried in triumph through the hostile city, and those sons of Jacob that had escaped the slaughter were led into slavery and banishment.—Rome's triumph, however, was not unending, and the town that had vainly styled itself *eternal* was sacked by unheard of barbarians breaking forth from the very centre of Asia, the cradle of mankind.—Again, these barbarians felt the force of elegance and learning, they occupied the fields which they had laid waste, and reared kingdoms, and aimed for universal empire.—Well nigh the scheme succeeded, and all Europe listened to the command of a ruler unknown in ancient times, and the head of a religious sect dictated laws and disposed of empires from his seat at Rome, and dared to call himself God's vicegerent on earth. Every thing seemed at one time to yield to this almost magic spell, and kings and nations poured out their blood at the bidding of this fancied power for the recovery of a fancied treasure; and

the right of thinking and of worshipping God after the dictates of the law was called a crime, because it gainsayed the doctrines of the Roman pontiff. And straightways the torch of persecution was kindled, and in every town blazed the stake, and in every place was erected the gallows, in every district was set up the scaffold, to immolate the victims on the altars of a false belief.—Where now was refuge for Israel?—Hardly had persecution ceased at one spot, because of the want of objects for slaughter, when the rage showed itself at another, and the star of Jacob seemed nigh its setting for ever. But again the power, which seemed so strong, was broken, and before the words of an humble man nations, once ready to strike in its cause, buckled on their armour against its head and his supporters, and by degrees the fire of persecution was smothered, and in some measure was enlargement vouchsafed to Israel to recover fresh strength to meet the fulfilment of their destiny;—this was the will of heaven.—Who can say, after candidly viewing the history of the world, as we have just done, that every step has not been an improvement? and do we not clearly perceive, in all the mutation of empire, the evident finger of God displayed in the preservation of our nation amidst all the vicissitudes of fortune? There flourished the Egyptians—but where are they? the Assyrians—but they are no more;—the Babylonians—their very memory is forgotten;—the Persians—but their empire has not left a wreck behind;—the Grecians—but their very religion is now a theme of ridicule, and what remains of their state is not a resemblance of its former greatness; and lastly,—the Romans—how powerful were they not once, the words:—“The Senate and the Roman People” struck terror in the most distant lands; but long since has this greatness ceased, and this terror has not for ages past oppressed the world.—Again, the religion of Rome after the downfall of its empire, which as said was nigh becoming universal, has lost its power of harming, for the nations, which it once kept in subjection, have each almost adopted a reformed system, as they term it, of their own, and men now legislate on the most sacred topics as though the eternal concerns of the soul could be regulated like a matter of state policy by the voice of a despot, who speaks in the name of his people, or by an assembled body of politicians, or even at

length by some learned philosopher or divine, who builds up systems or pulls them down, as it happens to suit his fancy.— Yet under all circumstances, whether as rulers or as slaves, whether prosperous or oppressed, we the Israelites have maintained untact God's greatest and best gift, we have preserved the law, we have adhered to the revelation from Sinai; we have, in a word, continued true to the character of a people of God, a beloved treasure! This is no vain boasting, this is no idle grandiloquence; no—brethren it is the sober truth, an undeniable truth, which our worst opponents dare not, cannot, gainsay!—But not for our own glorification did the Almighty preserve us, not to show us up as something curious was all this effected; but for a far nobler end, that we might become the means gradually to amend the rest of mankind, and at length to be the agents in spreading salvation, both temporal and permanent, to the ends of the earth.

Do you now see what is meant by the reign of the king Messiah? is it now clear to you what is to be his mission?—what his doings?—what his character?—Evidently the reign of the Messiah must be one of happiness and peace; his mission must, in the first instance, be to the Israelites, and then to the rest of mankind; his doings in this mission must be characterised by truth, justice, and rectitude; and his character must be like that of prophets of old—like Moses, like Samuel, like Elijah, one of piety, and hope, and entire singleness with the Lord his God.—In all this he needs not any attributes of divinity, no delegation of any more of the divine power than was awarded before this to extraordinary men who acted in the name of God, and by his will, in a sphere of greatness and glory which had been marked out for them. It will moreover be obvious to you, that the mission of such a gifted one, endowed above all men with wisdom, with understanding, and with power, and wholly guided in all his acts by a holy will, and protected by divine favour, is an object over which God may be supposed to watch (to speak in the language of man) with particular solicitude; and that besides, the period of this mission will not be hastened, before every thing in the whole earth is in such a state of preparation, that the greatest effect can be produced in the shortest time; and that, as we are totally ignorant of the counsels of

God, any farther than He has been pleased to communicate them to us through his prophets, it would be idle presumption in us to fix this period with exactness, or to declare the world at one time more ripe for the expected coming than the other. Let me here at once remark that, therefore, it will avail nothing in an argument to assert, that the coming of the Messiah must have been fixed by prophets for a definite period, because Jews at one particular time looked for him with anxiety; for even granting that they were really expecting the Messiah at the time so often dwelt upon by our opponents: still that argues nothing more than that the hope of deliverance from thralldom was strong in the minds of our people, and that they looked forward with hope for the arrival of the son of David, to do for them at that time what the prophets had announced he should do, at what they called "the end of days," meaning a period remote and distant from the time of their prophecy.— Even grant that many persons started up, claiming the dignity of Messiah in their own persons, and deceiving many by pretended miracles; nay, grant that this feeling of hope was so strong that even the learned and the good were misled: it amounts to no more than that, at a period of almost unheard-of distress, our nation, true to their faith, looked towards Heaven as the source of their deliverance, but that for the sake of their great criminality, their prayer was not granted, although many were misled by an appearance of a counterfeit fulfilment of their wishes. To draw from such a deplorable state of confusion and dismay an argument in favour of the claims of any individual, chiefly because he lived at that very period of time, is resting upon a very weak foundation; and bad indeed must be that cause which would rest for support upon grounds so entirely devoid of cogency and force.

According to the views just exhibited, which are but a natural deduction of sound reasoning, without a resort to revelation, we have established, first, that a change in the order of things, as relates to the moral state of man, may safely be looked for; secondly, as God always acts through the agency of men, that the expected change will be wrought through a man whom, for the sake of distinction, we will call the Messiah, or the anointed, chosen, chief, the instrument in the hand of God; thirdly, that

this chosen agent will, and must, be eminent in all the virtues which adorn human nature, and that his mental endowments will correspond with his high office; fourthly, that the Israelites, the visible evidences of God's power, will be benefited in a high degree by the arrival of the deliverer; and lastly, that all nations will, under his reign, be led to a knowledge of the true and only God. Having thus stated our views, it is now necessary, according to our usual custom, to fortify every position by scriptural arguments, in order to show that in this, as well as in every other consolatory doctrine, Scripture tallies with reason.

Our first position is: "That a change will come over the moral state of man." Every philanthropist, of every age, I am well nigh tempted to assert, has revolved in his mind the means of preventing a resort to arms to settle national and individual disputes. But as often as one thought he had discovered the desired remedy, some untoward mishap proved that the means were inadequate, and that the beautiful vision had vanished into thin airy nothing. "Bloodshed is sinful," teaches the philanthropist; "War to the knife," is the patriot's word, who sees his country invaded and her sanctuaries violated: "Aggression is indefensible," is the motto of the peace-lover; but anon you are aroused by the war-whoop of the savage, and the cries of your bleeding infants—the sight of your murdered wife, rouse in you all the feelings of revenge which can prompt the bereaved father, the lone husband, to deeds of daring and a patient endurance of all the hardships and fatigues of war.—Who then can cry out "peace," when there is no peace? where is that concert of action by which modern diplomacy assayed to quench the torch of war? and is it not reasonable to presume that all new schemes will fail, as all others hitherto have utterly failed? But yet, that scheme which in human hands is but a Utopian attempt, which can never hope for success, in higher keeping will, must, yield the blessed fruit; and not for ever shall the brother bewail the slaughtered brother, nor the father mourn for the early, gory, grave of his beloved offspring. And, says the prophet, in speaking of human attempts (Malachi, chap. i. 4): "For if Edom even say:—We are destroyed, but we will rebuild the waste places; but thus says the Lord of hosts: Let

them build, and I will pull down; and people will call them: The country of desolation, and the people over whom the Lord is angry for evermore;”—for not to human hands, not to a mortal’s foresight, will the Lord yield the superintendence of his creation, an interference in his high prerogative of Ruler of the universe. But in the Lord’s own good time will be accomplished what Isaiah foretells:

וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים נִכּוֹן יְהִיֶּה הַר בֵּית ה' בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים  
וְנִשָּׂא מִגְּבְעוֹת וְנַהֲרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל הַגּוֹיִם : יִשְׁעֵיהּ ב' ב' :

“And it shall come to pass at the end of days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will stand firm on the top of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills, and to it shall stream all the nations.” ii. 2.

And then Isaiah continues: “And go will many nations and say: Come and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between nations, and correct many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; no nation shall lift sword against nation, and no more shall they learn war.”—But little need be added in explanation of a text so plain and self-evident. The prophet speaks of a change that is to take place, and describes it as two-fold; one is, the evident exaltation of the religion of the Lord as the universal law of the world, and the other, the perfect state of peace that is to prevail in consequence of the adoption of the holy law.—Now this is precisely that condition of society which has been so long and so ardently desired, and this we call in one word the *days of the Messiah*. Now, can any one maintain that this condition has been brought about? is there now one law, one faith, and one God universally acknowledged? is every sword beaten into a ploughshare? is every spear turned into a pruning-hook? or rather, does not the land resound with preparation for strife? do not nations plot each other’s downfall? does not daily the deep-mouthed canon thunder forth death and destruction to its doomed hundreds? do not yet hostile fleets from the far North and from the distant West sail

forth in all the gay array of martial prowess and settle the deep hatred of their rival nations in the far golden regions of the sunny East? And this you call peace? such discord you call harmony?—Or perhaps you imagine that the prophet spoke of mental peace, of agreement in religious tenets, a universal acquiescence in one rule of life.—But even this has not been attained. For how many are the creeds now which mankind acknowledge! There is the ignorant negro, who literally says to the stone: “Thou art my father;” and the barbarous South-Sea islander, who sacrifices his captives to his dreadful image; and there the indweller of the land of China, with his absurd mockeries in place of worship; again the adherent of the lama, believing in a perpetual reign of their man-idol on earth; and there you will behold the melancholy Hindoo, rolling in the sand to be crushed by the wagon of his false homage, or wallowing in the swamp of the Ganges, to be devoured by the crocodile or the shark; and there stands the fierce Arab, defying all law, an enemy to all men, and trusting only to his good lance, and he says: “There is but one God, but Mahomet is his prophet,” and his religion is one of forms mostly, and his beatitude but sensuality;—again behold the Romanist, seeking in the elected head of his church the vicegerent of his god; and the numerous sects of another belief next present themselves, all maintaining that each alone is right: and now you have a picture of discord in place of the harmony prophesied. And yet you say that the reign of the Messiah has endured already near two thousand years? when shall we look for harmony? is the dispute of sectarians waxing less angry as time advances? are not daily new and often monstrous absurdities propagated in the name of the king of peace? and where is this all to end? You perhaps say, at a second coming of the Messiah? So then you acknowledge that the first alleged coming failed of accomplishing all that was necessary; but we too hope for a coming of Messiah; but it is the first, the only coming, when all will be fulfilled and accomplished to the letter, which has been foretold concerning his ministry. For, in looking through the Scriptures to be informed on this important subject, we are constantly referred to the prince in whose days all shall dwell in safety; but in no one instance is

an allusion even made in so many words, to a second appearance after his removal from the eyes of the world.—On the contrary, a permanent reign is foretold : “And my servant David shall be prince over them for ever,” says Ezekiel, chap. xxxvii. 25, which verse surely, if it has any meaning, which nobody can deny, must indicate an everlasting state of blessedness, from the coming of the Messiah till all shall be resolved again into chaos, if this be the ultimate will of God, and a reproduction of a better earth and a better heaven. And who knows to a certainty, what is precisely meant by the new creation which is foretold in Isaiah lxvi. 22 ? The words are : “For like the new heavens and the new earth, which I make, will stand before me, says the Lord, thus shall stand your posterity and your name.” Now, this may mean, that when this earth and all the present system of nature shall have existed during a certain period, then a different system, one more perfect than the one now existing, shall be established, which after its formation shall stand permanently before its Creator ; such an idea, let me remark, is by no means discordant with the principles of men of science, who have endeavoured to seek wisdom from the records of nature itself.—Yet, in the midst of this change, the upholding of Jacob’s progeny is not to be lost sight of, and consequently the Messiah’s reign is not even then to terminate.—Another meaning of this verse may be, that it is the intention of God to remodel the moral state of the earth, and to infuse in all created things a spirit of love and unity, and thus a new creation will be effected in the moral and spiritual world, though the physical and material substances have undergone no perceptible change. In every view of this difficult question, however, it will be perceived, that the reign of the Messiah and the existence of the Israelitish people shall be unending while the world lasts.—All the above clearly proves, that according to the revelation of the prophets a great moral, and perhaps too a physical, change is impending, when the discord and strife which now distract the world shall no longer be experienced. Whatever events, please to observe, have taken place in by-gone days, whatever events are now occurring, and whatever events will come to pass in future times, all will tend ultimately to the consummation of this



great change. If now one nation rises in blood, and shoots up its branches from the ashes of a slaughtered people ; if we see apparent injustice even permitted to tread down upon the head of fallen greatness : we may rest in the hopeful assurance, that all is so wisely ordained, all so nicely balanced, that, when the end of all this warfare and this unhappiness shall have arrived, we will discover that all has truly happened for the best, and all has been so ordained by the counsel of Him who supervises all our conduct, that nothing but justice, nothing but righteousness, will be the ultimate result, and that the course of events was so organized as to bring about, in the best manner, the end which, in the mind of God, is already come to pass, which with Him is the past already, but which to us is yet the future, and the accomplishment of which we have yet to expect.—What matters it then, that first the Egyptians flourished, and next the Assyrians and Babylonians, then the Grecians, after them the Romans, whether it be roaming savages that scour the forest, or bigoted Spaniards that devoted millions of victims to destruction ? all, all are in his eyes but vanity, but like the dust that adheres to the polished scales—all their doings are nothing in his estimation, and He looks upon their efforts at greatness, upon their puny striving at renown, with derision and with scorn, as the Psalmist says (ii. 1-4) : “ Why do the nations storm, and people attempt vanity ?—He that thrones in heaven laughs, the Lord scorns them.” Not as though the holy One indulged in spiteful malice, but to make the human ear understand the utter weakness of human ambition.—In short, all is subservient to the great end that is approaching, slowly perhaps, to us, whose years are appointed to the short space of seventy annual revolutions, or perhaps to the frosty age of eighty ; but quickly, speedily, to Him, whose age no numbers can indicate, whose existence is not limited by time or space.—As yet, however, the state of warfare is not over ; as yet oppression stalks abroad ; as yet Israel is compelled to bend his head under the heavy yoke which oppressors fasten on his neck ; as yet wickedness assumes the right of giving the law to innocence ; and consequently the altered state of the world has not arrived, the Messiah has not yet been sent. But the time of this great event may be very near, nearer than any one imagines,—the wrathful

time of trial may be approaching; but where is the preparation which is needed to pass the fiery ordeal? And what says the prophet? (Malachi iii. 1-4): "Behold, I send my angel, who shall make clear the way before me; and suddenly will come to his temple the Lord whom you are seeking; and the angel of the covenant, whom ye are desiring, behold! he comes, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming? and who can stand when he appears? for he is like the fire of the refiner and the soap of the fullers. And as sitteth the refiner and purifies the silver, so he will cleanse the children of Levi and purify them like the gold and like the silver, that only those shall be the Lord's (servants) who bring the offering in righteousness. Then will be pleasant to the Lord, the offering of Judah and Jerusalem, like in days of olden times and years of former days."—The refiner will come and sift the sinners from among the community of the righteous;—and what will stand the test of the Messiah's fire? will it be a mass of wealth?—a renown for greatness in eloquence or prowess in arms?—will it be the love which one bears for pleasures and sensuality?—No, it will be the love which we bear to God, the readiness which we show to obey his laws, and the mass of virtues, which alone is our true inheritance in this world, here whilst living, and in yonder life, when our soul has departed to the place of its first origin.—O, let it then be our aim to observe the precepts of the Lord, and let us ever be willing and prepared to yield ourselves obedient servants to his will, as our ancestors were on that day, when assembled by the faithful Moses they stood at the foot of Sinai, and heard announced from amidst the fire the ten commandments which God instituted as the terms of the covenant between Him and Israel. Now, these are the riches which we possess; these are the blessings which God wishes to spread over all the earth; these are the gifts which the Messiah is to distribute to all people; and when he, therefore, is sent to rejoice the hearts of all men, nations indeed will exclaim: "Let us go to the house of the God of Jacob, and let Him teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths," and then truly will it be fulfilled what the prophet says: "That from Zion shall go out the law and the word of God from Jerusalem."

O our Father and King! how long shall we hope? how long shall we pray? and when wilt Thou hear us? for ages we have hoped for peace, but our prayers were not heard; we looked for quiet, but the oppressor was suffered to lord over us! O let it now be thy will to hasten the days of our deliverance, and cause it to be verified in our days, that the angel of the covenant and the son of David thy servant may come to gladden our hearts with thy salvation; and then our joy will be complete, when Thou barest thy holy arm before all nations, and provest to the whole world that Thou, O Lord, art God alone, and that besides Thee there is none in heaven, and none like unto Thee among the powers of the earth; but that to Thee, truly, belong the kingdom and the adoration of all mankind! Amen.

Shebat 17th. }  
February 5th. } 5596.

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## DISCOURSE XLVIII.

### THE MESSIAH.

O THOU! Shepherd of Israel, hear our supplications, and let thy countenance shine unto us; renew in us a pure heart, and infuse in us thy holy spirit, that we may know how to serve Thee and to fear Thee all the days that we live on the earth. Amen.

#### BRETHREN!

In the view we have taken thus far of the subject of the Messiah, we have arrived at the conclusion, that both reason and Scripture warrant us in looking forward to a change that

is impending over the moral state of man. This change, we have shown, must produce a state of universal peace all over the earth, so that no one, be he weak or strong, need to fear or to ward off the attacks of his neighbour. We have also proved, that this state is not the present state of the world, and consequently, that the predictions of the prophets have in this respect, not yet seen their fulfilment; and whereas the announcement of the prophets must be true as the emanation of the holy Spirit: it is reasonable, and consonant with religion, to look forward with an unwavering confidence to the fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the state of universal peace.—The second deduction laid down was, that this change was to be effected through an agent, whom we call the Messiah. On this subject so much has already been said incidently, that we might pass over to the next point, which you perhaps recollect was the character of this messenger; but it being perhaps best to draw some more light from Scripture, we will illustrate it a little more at large.—Already in the book of Genesis we find, that Jacob prophesied of a Shiloh, to whom the nations should assemble. This evidently refers to a messenger, whom God was to send to fulfil the object of the world's regeneration. The prophecy, it may freely be admitted, is not very explicit as to the manner in which this was to be effected; but later prophets afford us more ample and enlarged details, and as the whole Bible is but one entire, as has been demonstrated on other occasions, one part must always be taken to illustrate the other. And we are, therefore, warranted in the belief, that Jacob spoke of the same teacher, whom the seers of later ages foresaw in their visions. One remarkable phrase you must particularly note in all prophecies concerning Messiah; it is that the words: באחרית הימים “In the end of days” are employed in nearly all, from Jacob, the earliest one who spoke of the Messiah, to the latter days of the first, nay, even down to the commencement of the second temple. This would seem to prove, that not one of the prophets contemplated the desired advent as absolutely close at hand, and that the rebuilding of the house of God by Ezra and his associates was not viewed as an accomplishment of the promised happiness of the people of Israel. This, it will be easily seen, is an important point in

our argument, and which scarcely can be overthrown by any thing that has been advanced against us, so far as my knowledge thereof extends. So then, it would appear, that Jacob the first prophet, who predicted the Messiah in distinct terms, referred, no less than his successors, his advent to a period remote, more or less, according to the fitness of the world for the altered state that is to follow in his footsteps.—Bileam, in his advice to Balak to mislead Israel to sin, also spoke (Numb. xxiv. 14): “And now I am ready to go to my people; come, I will counsel thee, what this people will do to thy people at the end of days.” And in ver. 17, he says, foreseeing the exalted glory of Israel: “I see him, but he is not yet now, I behold him, but he is not near; a star steps forth from Jacob, and a stem arises from Israel, and he will bruise the corners of Moab, and tread down all the children of Seth.” Ver. 19: “A ruler shall come from Jacob and destroy the remainder from the city.” In this passage, so corroborative of the Patriarch’s words, an agent, nay, a human agent is distinctly announced, and we are told, that his advent was seen by the gentile prophet, although it had not then been witnessed, nor was it to be near at hand; and that to the messenger was to belong the earthly rule over the nations. This remarkable prediction is further supported by Isaiah, chap. lx. 12: “For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve shall perish, and the nations shall be utterly laid waste;” and by Jeremiah xlvi. 27–28: “But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return and be at rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Thou—do thou not fear my servant Jacob, says the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but of thee I will not make a full end; I will correct thee in judgment, but never destroy thee altogether.”—Although these two passages do not speak of the Messiah, I am induced to cite them at this stage of the argument to exhibit at one view the connection between the various predictions delivered at so great distances of time, and under varying circumstances. Having now touched this point, it may be as well to state at once that the annihilation of the gentiles does not allude to the

extermination of the individuals composing the mass of mankind ; but only to their national existence, which will be effected, the more fully to reduce the whole remainder of the human race to peace and harmony. The individuals, however, are not to be cut off, but are to become servants of the Lord, as will be shown hereafter.—It will be seen from the foregoing, that the idea of a redeeming human agent, acting under the evident supervision of God, was distinctly known to the Israelites, as early as the days of Moses, and even before ; this also is a very important point in our argument, and must do away with the assumption which has been hazarded, that the early Israelites knew nothing of a Messiah.—If we now trace the prophecies downwards, including several other allusions of Moses, we shall find the great hope for a human saviour under God constantly kept in view ; but it would require much time to cite the whole and to illustrate them. We must therefore proceed at once to the distinct annunciation of the redeemer, and his character, which we find in the books of the later prophets, from which indeed most of our doctrines must be confirmed, as they are more ample in detail than the scattered predictions of former periods.—Let us begin with Isaiah ; in his eleventh chapter he says : “ And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And on him shall rest the spirit of the Lord ; the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord.—And he will be animated by the fear of the Lord, and not by the appearance of his eyes will he judge, nor by the hearing of his ears will he decide. But with righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide in equity for the meek of the land, and he will smite the earth with the staff of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his hips.” And in continuation : “ And it shall come to pass on that day, to him of the root of Jesse, that stands as a banner to nations, the people shall seek, and his rest shall be glorious.” Jeremiah, chap. xxx. 9, says : “ And they will serve the Lord their God, and David their king whom I will raise up unto them.”—Chapter xxxiii : “ Behold days are coming, says the Lord, when I

fulfil the good thing which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and over the house of Judah. In those days and in that time I will let grow unto David the plant of righteousness, and he shall do justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely, and this is the name which men will call her: 'The Lord our righteousness.' " Ezekiel says (chap. xxxvii.): "And speak to them, thus saith the Lord God: Behold I take the children of Israel from between the nations whither they have wandered, and I will gather them from the parts around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them unto one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall no more be two nations, and no longer be divided into two kingdoms. And they shall not any more pollute themselves with their idols and their abominations and with all their transgressions; and I will help them from all their dwelling places where they have sinned, and I will cleanse them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them, and one shepherd shall be to them all,—in my judgments they shall walk, and my statutes they shall keep and do them. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given to my servant, to Jacob, where their forefathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, themselves, their children and their children's children for ever, and my servant David shall be prince to them for ever."—And in reference to the same subject we read chapter xxxiv: "And I will save my flock, and they shall be plundered no longer, and I will judge between lamb and lamb. I also will raise unto them one shepherd who shall feed them; my servant David—he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be to them as God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it."—Hosea, too, clearly speaks of the Messiah; and like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, calls him David; for we read in chap. iii. 5: "After that the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king."—Amos also alludes to the same personages (chap. ix. 11): "On that day I will raise the fallen tabernacle of David, and I will repair its breaches, and

its ruins I will raise up, and build it up as in former days.”—Micah, after stating the punishment that was to overtake the Israelites for their wickedness, speaks of the glory that should ultimately await them, when all had been accomplished, and thus addresses the city from whence the family of David have sprung (v. 1–3): “And thou Bethlehem Ephrata, small though thou art among the large towns of Judah, from thee shall he go out for me to become the ruler in Israel, whose forefathers were of old, from the days of former ages.—And he shall then stand up and feed them (the remainder of Israel) with the might of the Lord, in the glorious name of the Lord his God, and they shall dwell (securely); for now he shall be great even to the corners of the earth.”—Zechariah also speaks of the Messiah in the following words: “Rejoice greatly thou daughter of Zion, shout daughter of Jerusalem, for thy king will come to thee, righteous and victorious he is, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt the son of the she-ass. And I will destroy the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and destroyed shall be the bow of war; for peace he shall speak to the nations, and his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” (ix.)—In the foregoing, I have endeavoured to lay before you a concurrent mass of scriptural texts to show to you at one view, what the Bible teaches concerning the person and character of the expected redeemer. You will discover, that among the texts selected, I have adopted several on which the Nazarenes rely particularly as foundations for their own faith; but upon a close inspection it will readily be perceived, that their construction cannot hold good, as the described character and doings of their reputed messiah does not accord with the whole of the requirements of prophecy.—You will now see, that, in all the passages quoted, the Messiah is either called David, from David’s stem, from Jesse’s root, the king, the prince, but never a god or a son of god; in fact, the idea of a divine redeemer other than the Creator himself, is nowhere indicated, as far as we can learn. The chief personal characteristic of the Messiah then is, his lineal descent from David, who was the son of Jesse of Bethlehem. And, as with us maternal descent does not confer the name of her family upon the offspring, any more than among other civilized



nations, as no priest could be so, merely by his mother's being a priest's daughter (and so in other cases): it farther follows, that the descent from David means a descent in the male line, which, as has been shown on a former occasion, was never to cease according to the promise of prophecy. In what manner the Nazarene claimant of the messiahship answers in this respect to the prophecies, remains yet to be shown.—I must here draw your attention to an objection that might, perhaps, be made by unbelievers, that the whole of the scheme of Messiah may have been an invention of court-sycophants to please the reigning family of Judah, then ruling in Jerusalem. To this we answer, that even if Isaiah could have had such a motive, as he lived under the flourishing rule of Hezekiah: still this could not have operated on the others, especially, as at least two, to wit: Hosea and Amos, lived in the rival kingdom of Samaria, and one, Ezekiel, was in captivity among the Babylonians. Besides this, Jeremiah spoke bitterly against the kings who misgoverned God's people; and at the very time when he with anguished feelings witnessed the assault of the Chaldeans upon the battered walls of Jerusalem, when famine, pestilence and the sword were slaying their thousands, when Zedekiah was taken during his flight, when his children were slaughtered in his presence, his eyes bored out, and he was led bound with fetters to Babylon, it was that the most cheering promises with regard to the consolation of Israel were promulgated. Where then could be his motive, save that of holy truth, to speak of greatness to come to the house of David? Besides, what motive could Jacob have to predict glory to Judah, who, no matter how devoted soever he had been latterly to his father, had certainly been the adviser of selling the beloved Joseph into banishment and slavery?—I know not indeed that such an objection has ever been started; but infidelity is so fruitful of inventions, that I thought it might be advisable to refute a supposed question, even before it was stated; since it is quite as good as most that are so gravely urged against our holy religion and our hopes of better things. So far, however, from its impairing the credibility of the expectation of a Messiah from David's line, the remarkable unanimity of men speaking at such distant periods—one patriarch, one heathen, some Jews,

others priests, and others again Israelites, some during the first temple, others during captivity, others at last after the rebuilding of God's house ; of whom some were men of high authority, as Isaiah and Daniel, others again men of humble life, as Amos and Jonah and Jeremiah,—must convince any one, except a bitter sceptic, that the spirit of God alone could have produced the result ; especially as several of the prophets were cotemporary ; for instance, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Hosea and Isaiah, and it is not probable, speaking humanly, that one could have known what the other one spoke at a great distance, and living in a different kingdom. To assert that the prophecies were made at one time, by one or more men, is too absurd a position to deserve a serious refutation. For, as has been shown in another place,\* the style of the various books of the Bible is so different, and the internal evidence so strong, that each actor in the scenes described was the narrator himself, or had a cotemporary historian, that it cannot be possible that the Bible should have been composed at one period of time ; and if then it is admitted, as it must be, that the several books were written at different times and at different places, by persons unacquainted with each other personally, and perhaps with each other's writings : the position we have taken becomes incontrovertible, namely, that the unanimity of the prophets is the strongest proof that what they announced was the truth, infused into their minds by the inspiration of the holy Spirit. This son of David is to be an agent of God, for we are distinctly told : “ And I will raise unto them one shepherd who shall feed them, my servant David,—and I will be their God.” In this prophecy, which cannot be mistaken, the prophetic, or rather the delegate character of the redeemer, is announced ; and consequently to assert that the Messiah is to be in any way, even by implication, independant of his Sender is to speak contrary to revelation ; or in other words, Messiah is to be a man, a man only, and no god. If now the true Messiah does appear, as appear he will in the end of days, he will at once announce himself as the *messenger* of God, and in his holy name he will speak. Even grant (what we sometime ago

\* Jews and Mosaic Law, chap. xxiii. pp. 170–171.

denied as exclusively applicable to him) that the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy alludes to Messiah, then he will address the people as Moses always did before, and as did the other prophets, with : " Thus speaks the Lord." But on no account is he to have any power to alter of his own accord any commandment, either positive or negative ; but, being one of the people, a man like them, a subject to divine authority as well as they, he is to be bound by the same laws which they have to obey, and he is to execute the divine will, not to set himself above it. If we now are asked : " Whether we believe the law to be perpetual ?" we may answer, unhesitatingly, yes ; since the advent of the Messiah in no place seems in the prophets' minds to be connected with the abrogation of any commandment. On the contrary, Ezekiel, chap. xlv, in speaking of the days that are to come, distinctly refers to the sacrifices, to Sabbaths, new-moon-days, and festivals, and furthermore to the jubilee, or the year of freedom ; consequently the law which we now possess, and which contains the enactments of these precepts, after these days shall also be observed. It is true that some slight additions are prescribed with regard to the prince, but they are only for him, and not for the people at large, therefore mere, so to say, local or individual regulations, not general laws. If now a claimant to the dignity of Messiah arrogates divine attributes, or claims the power of destroying the law and the prophets: he cannot, of necessity, be the one whom we expect, and whom Moses and the prophets foretold.

The man Messiah, we stated, in the enumerations of the doctrinal points advanced, " must be eminent in all the virtues which adorn man: and his mental endowments will correspond with his high office."—This character is especially ascribed to him in the extract from the eleventh chapter of Isaiah we have quoted. " On him shall rest the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord."—We here see, first, that the Messiah is not to be an ordinary man, not one merely wise as others are, but particularly fitted for the high requirements of his glorious mission. He shall possess capacity for information—or wisdom; capacity for judgment—or

understanding; capacity for governing and advising—or counsel; capacity for energy in maintaining the right, supporting the innocent, and repressing the wicked—or might; he shall have extensive knowledge, or whatever any man knows or can acquire, that shall be familiar to him; and, at last, all these gifts are to be crowned by the utmost reliance on heavenly aid, and he will ever have the fear of God before him. For this exemplary conduct he will have the spirit of prophecy—or knowledge of hidden things; and in his exercise of justice, he will therefore not have to depend on the pleadings of the parties interested, nor will he have to rely upon the outward appearance which a case may present to the human eye; but, more than any other man, he will be able to dive into what to them is unknown, expose the evil to the eye of day, and bring out the right, though struggling against powerful craft and consummate wickedness. Evil doers in him will find an unflinching judge, and he, in imitation of the God that sends him, will fear neither the great, nor be terrified by the mighty; “and he will smite the earth with the staff of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked;” whilst, on the other hand, “he will judge with righteousness the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the land.” It must be kept in mind that a great cause of wickedness and oppression is, that the tribunals, before which the criminals are to be arraigned, are apt to be deceived; and therefore we are promised that the Messiah should in his judgment be guided by more insight than other judges, so that no crime, however secretly committed, shall escape his cognizance. This, then, gives us a third characteristic—the Messiah must be eminently wise, and a dispenser of justice. Such a one has not yet been seen on earth, and consequently we yet expect his coming. In addition to what Isaiah thus emphatically announces, we have also the prophecy of Jeremiah; in his third chapter he says: “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” In chapter xxiii. we have a further explanation as to who these shepherds are to be: “And I will raise unto them shepherds who shall feed them, and they (the flock or the people) shall no longer fear nor be terrified, nor be missing any more. Behold days are coming, says the

Lord, that I will erect unto David the plant of the righteous, and he shall rule as king and act prudently, and do justice and righteousness in the land. In his days shall Judah be saved, and Israel dwell securely, and this is the name which they shall call him: 'The Lord our Righteousness.'” To understand these passages correctly, it is only necessary to refer back to the occupation which David, the first king of Judah, followed, even after he had been anointed king—he was a shepherd; besides which, Moses already compared Israel to a flock, for whom he begged of God the appointment of a trusty shepherd. Add to this that our people were an agricultural nation, living from the produce of their farms and pastures, and but little given to luxuries and trading, before the pure spirit of the divine legislation had lost its influence among them. All the prophetic imagery is therefore drawn from the pursuits of husbandry, with but few exceptions. Jeremiah, now, had uttered his complaints against the wicked rulers, by whose mismanagement the people went to ruin; he styled them: “Shepherds that destroy and scatter the flock of God’s pasture,” and announced at the same time that these bad shepherds should be punished. But he says: “That though the flock had been scattered, the remainder should be gathered to their former fold, where they should increase and multiply;” and he then continues with the passage quoted: “And I will raise unto them shepherds who shall feed them,” meaning that at the restoration of the people under the king Messiah, who is to be the righteous plant from David, leaders should arise who will be different, far different, from the officers of the Jewish kings, who oppressed the poor and misled the wealthy. From this we again learn the character of the redeemer: he is to be a leader after God’s own mind, just and equitable, free from the taint of injustice, and perfectly submissive to the behests of the Lord. Under him security is to reign; no one there shall be to make the remnant of Israel afraid, for they shall dwell free from aggression and assault. The name of the prince, too, as well as of the glorious city, shall be: “The Lord our Righteousness,” but as yet the city of Jerusalem is not inhabited securely; its name is not *ה' צדקתו*, nor has that man arisen who is the leader of all Israel, and who is honoured with the same name!

As shown already prophets say much relative to the high characteristics of the coming king but the limits which must be given to a public address will not permit me to adduce them all. We must therefore be satisfied for the present with adverting only to the passage from Zechariah, already quoted, to show the expectations we entertain of a Messiah to be consonant with Scripture. "Rejoice greatly, thou daughter of Zion, for thy king will come to thee, righteous and victorious he is, meek and riding on an ass, on a colt the son of the she-ass."—We have been taunted by our opponents with expecting a mere temporary king, a warrior and a conqueror.—To this we reply, that we expect in the Messiah a two-fold character—the one purely spiritual, as has been shown already, and as I intend proving hereafter in a subsequent address; but the other characteristic is certainly temporary, and no one, we are free to say, can be the Messiah, who does not unite both in his own person.—From Ezekiel especially, and also Obediah and Zechariah, it appears that great wars will be waged in Palestine at the time of the end; and farther that this will be a time of great tribulation to Israel. We are also told, that our people will, by the aid of God, escape from the threatened extirpation; and now this aid of God will be rendered through an agent, who is the Messiah; he is therefore called righteous and victorious, literally however, a helped one, meaning guided and assisted of God. If this temporal character of warrior in the holy cause of defending his people and of subjecting barbarians, who come to kill and destroy, derogates from his high dignity in the estimation of our opponents: they are perfectly welcome to all the addition to their argument which they can derive from it; we see nothing in it save a farther proof of the goodness of God, in protecting his people from destruction against a, perhaps, united world. But let it not be lost sight of, that immediately after speaking of the victoriousness of Messiah, the prophet calls him "meek riding on an ass;" and why so humbly mounted? why not on a prancing war-steed? why not bedecked with the spoils of the vanquished? Because says Zechariah: "I will destroy the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem," the king himself, therefore, will not appear on a beast of war, but on an humble animal of labour, for meekness will be the cha-

racter of him, as well as it was of Moses, and he will in his own person teach humility and love of God ; and then, (after the wars of these times are over,) “ destroyed shall be the bow, for peace he shall speak to the nations, and his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” So that the temporal actions of our future hope shall redound as much to the benefit of mankind as his spiritual gifts will be, for those will pave the way for peace and happiness; these will establish the same on a foundation which shall never be moved. I regret exceedingly, that I cannot dwell longer on the subject, and examine more at length the objections so often made ; but I trust, that what has been said will prove, that our opinions are altogether founded on the word of God, and are conformable to the dictates of reason. God, understand well, works through natural means and natural agents, and consequently these will always be resorted to in some measure, even at the performing of great miracles.

Connected however with the advent of the son of David is the mission of another glorious name, that of Elijah the prophet; for we read, Malachi iii. 23–24 :

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בא יום ה'  
הגדול והנורא : והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על  
אבותם : מלאכי ג' כג-כד :

“ Behold I send unto you Elijah the prophet, before comes the day of the Lord, the great and fearful; and he will bring back the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers.”

So then it appears that love and truth are to pave the way for the great day of the Lord, and Elijah is to come to be the precursor of the redeemer. No Elijah has yet come to gladden the hearts of the parents and the children ; consequently the great day has not yet arrived.—The message of love has not yet been announced ; discord and contention yet disturb the peace of the family home ;—where then is the fulfilment of the prediction ? But the God of truth has spoken the word by his servant; He that never errs has said, that the coming time shall teem with salvation ;—let it then be our endeavour to fortify

ourselves in faith, and to deserve the blessings which will follow the footsteps of the Lord whom we are seeking, and of the angel of the covenant whom we desire.

May it be the will of our Father to guard us on the path of life which we are pursuing ; may He pour out his blessing over us, and yield to each man the good desire of his heart ; and may He to his chosen nation especially give his grace, and enlighten their hearts, even in the lands whither they have wandered for their manifold transgressions, that they may learn to discern between the true and the false, the good and the evil. May He deliver them from the snares of the ungodly, who constantly aim to rob them of their hope and their support, the law which He himself has given ; so that all the house of Israel, and after them the whole race of man, may be found worthy in His eyes, to send down from heaven Elijah the angel of the covenant, and cause His anointed one to come to gladden us with peace and salvation. Amen.

Nissan 7th. }  
March 25th. } 5596.

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## DISCOURSE XLIX.

### THE MESSIAH.

TO THEE, O King of glory, do we turn our eyes ; on Thee, O Father of mercy, do we call, to grant us salvation and peace, and to cover us and all the earth with the panoply of thy grace and bounty ! O, our God, Thou hast said, that the earth should be full of knowledge of Thee, and that no nation should lift up sword against nation ; do Thou now, according to thy promise, and cease, by thy potent might, the strife and contention which at present desolate the earth ; and remove speedily



the yoke of oppressions which the humble ones are suffering from the hands of those stronger than they ! And cause Thou the redeemer, even David thy servant, to be sent unto us to gladden our hearts, and to bid those rejoice who now mourn for Zion, the city of thy holiness ! May this be thy will, speedily, and in our days ! Amen.

### BRETHREN !

Let us once more revert to the elucidation of the doctrines connected with the Messiah, or, as we have explained the word in our last lecture, to the man, descended from David, endowed with high intellect and virtue, deputed, or anointed, by the Most High to work out the change of which the prophets speak as impending over the outward world.—It is evident, even without resorting to the Bible for proof, that, consistently with the truth of God, the people, whom He once chose of all nations as the depositary of his will and law, cannot, by any possibility, be excluded from participating in the benefits resulting from the mission of the high functionary, whom all their seers taught them to expect. For to argue otherwise would, to say no more, be impeaching the wisdom of God, for having selected a family as the recipients of the highest trust, who would, on the first and greatest opportunity, utterly fail of answering the end intended, and show themselves entirely unworthy of the great grace vouchsafed unto them. For, what other reason could there be to deny them a share in the happiness to be brought through the Messiah ? would God be unkind to those, once called his children, without a very powerful motive for their rejection ? Let us pause one moment, and see what this powerful motive can be, even supposing that one should exist. It cannot be a denial of the Deity himself ; for, amidst all the apostacies of the Israelites, we never yet saw the period when a total neglect of the Deity and his commands took place, and relying upon the historic records of the Bible, there was accordingly no time in all the seasons of trouble and destruction, when our nation was utterly forsaken by the Lord ; and convulsions, which overthrew and annihilated other empires, compared to which our state was hardly as a small corner,

merely purified our people, and even if diminished in number by every passage through the smelting furnace, a hardier, a firmer, a purer body always emerged after every trial. All this proves that mere sinning will not deprive us entirely of the grace of God; we must therefore seek for the cause of such a supposition farther even than the nearly universal apostacy witnessed in the days of the kings of Judah and Israel. It must be the rejection of the Messiah when he comes. But it requires but small penetration to discover that this course can never take place. We ask: "To whom did the prophets speak, when predicting the redeemer?" the Bible answers: "To the sons of Israel." "To whom again did God speak when saying, that even in the land of their enemies He would never forsake them, though their sins had banished them from their lovely inheritance?" The Bible again answers: "To the sons of Israel." "To whom were the prophets like Moses promised? in the midst of whom walked in humble guise the man that never tasted the cup of death? whose ancestors stood at the foot of the burning mount to receive the law of the King of glory? whose forefathers were called the friends of God?"—"None others than the people of Israel!" And yet we can assume, that they alone should, of all mankind, wilfully place themselves out of the pale of God's mercy by rejecting the messenger, whom He purposed sending from the beginning, nay, whilst they ostensibly profess to be guided by the ordinances of the law which he gave to them as his will! could blindness be carried farther? And assuming this is possible, what can be thought of the wisdom that selected such a people of all others as the guardians of the law? is it possible to suppose, that the religion to be upheld by the advent so much desired can be spread to the limits of the earth, whilst its first possessors are false to their trust, in even rejecting the messenger, and thereby incurring a punishment greater far than was suffered for apostacy and the worship of idols?—We could multiply questions like these, and endeavour to strengthen conviction yet farther; but what needs it to adduce arguments to prove that the sun sheds light at the noon of day, and what proof do you require, that God's wisdom is unerring, and that his means always accomplish their object? We must therefore dismiss the

absurd idea, that the Messiah is not for the Israelites, and we must assume that the son of David will also to our nation bring salvation and peace, among the rest of the sons of Adam.

Let us now see what our nation stands in especial need of, and what have always been the causes of our weakness. We need, more than any thing else, an entire and perfect union; since our present existence can hardly be called national, being dispersed, as we are, in unimportant numbers all over the globe—oppressed in many countries, tolerated merely in others, and regarded as equals in but few indeed. To such a state of degradation have we, the people of God, been reduced, and it is thus we suffer the burden of our iniquities. Now, it is not to be denied, that to a nation, that has been once independant and free it is of vast importance and of paramount interest to enjoy an equal share of liberty of action as formerly, and hence no efforts, however heroic, are held as too dearly applied, that will produce this result. And tell a conquered people, to cease longing for a reinstatement of their government, because their new rulers govern with justice and moderation: and you will be answered, that nothing can compensate for precious laws abolished, for homes desolated, and for altars overturned. This sentiment of regret has never been a stranger to the captives of Judah; and many have been the tears that flowed for thee, O holy Zion! many have been the sighs heaved at remembering thee, O sacred city of Salem! and let thy children, land of Israel, land of loveliness, wander whither they may, unto thy distant shores they will turn in their prayers, and bless the dust in which sleep their fathers—their fathers!—their prophets!—the friends of their God! And should we not weep over our fallen state, when we see the ordinances of the Lord held in light esteem? when in no one country the code of Moses is obeyed? when as slaves or as citizens our brothers are constantly enticed away to forsake the religion of their fathers? when, alas! the arts of our adversaries on the one side, and the open violence of the persecutor on the other, have been equally effective in drawing away many a faint-hearted Israelite from his hope—from his only stay of salvation? Shall we not mourn, that in the land of Moriah the stranger worships in his false belief, and that the cities of our beloved land are the

dwelling of robbers, the abode of ravenous beasts? that the fields are deserted, and the plains rendered desolate? Shall we not call in our agony to the Lord, when we are told, that to us, of all men, the rights of man must be denied, that the children of the faith are unworthy of trust—destitute of honour—solely because they build their faith on one God—on one law? Shall we not pray to Him, who is alone the Lord of vengeance, to require the blood, the innocent blood, of his servants that has flowed in streams unmeasured, because they would not forsake Him, their Father and God?—Aye, surely, these and many more have been the consequences of our dispersion and dismemberment, and it is, therefore, reasonable to hope, that, since God will send the Messiah to restore peace on earth, He will also cause our dispersions to be gathered and united again in a land, which was their own, the land of Palestine in which their forefathers dwelt. Upon a farther search into our history we will discover, that nearly all the calamities, to which our nation has ever been subject, had their origin in a want of unanimity among ourselves, and the absence of a devotion to God. If now all the dispersed Israelites should be assembled together in one body, and there should be a diversity of interests prevalent among them, no permanent union could be thought of. And if even a political unity of feeling should exist, but a rebellion towards God be encouraged: the peace thus upheld would be of small advantage, whilst every act of ours would anew call down the oft-experienced vengeance of Heaven. Just as at the time of Jeroboam, division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel caused at first contention among the rival chiefs; and when the latter, in order to make more complete their severance from the family of David, induced their subjects to throw off the yoke of the divine law: expulsion from their land and banishment to distant climes were the doom of the wicked and apostate race. Would it then be wise in God to gather the Israelites without removing these great stumbling-blocks? Assuredly not, especially as we always see, that the actions of God on earth never fail of effecting a useful end. We must therefore come to the conclusion, that at the appropriate time a reassemblage of all the children of Israel will take place, and that the returning

captives will be without envy towards each other, and all devoted, heart and soul, to the service of their Maker. You will observe, brethren, that in all these deductions we have not quoted a single Bible-text; and still we may freely challenge the exposition of the want of a single connexion between the argument and the conclusion arrived at, although merely deduced from common reasoning. But these views, thus proved to be reasonable, are also perfectly consonant with the doctrines and the evident text of the prophecies; and according to our usual method, we will now proceed to adduce a number of parallel passages from various prophets, all tending to prove the intention of God to preserve the Israelites amidst their captivity, and to restore them again to their former land, united under one head and devoted to the laws given through the servant, faithful in the whole house of the Lord.—Moses, the father of the prophets, speaks thus (Deut. xxx., beginning at verse 1): “And it shall come to pass, when all these things have come over thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have laid before thee, and thou wilt reflect in thy heart, in the midst of all the nations, whither the Lord thy God has banished thee; and thou do return unto the Lord thy God, and hearken unto his voice, according to all I command thee this day, thyself and thy children, with all thy heart and all thy soul: then will the Lord thy God restore thy captives, and will return and gather thee from all the people, whither the Lord thy God has scattered thee. If thy dispersions shall be at the end of heaven, from there even the Lord thy God will gather thee, and thence He will take thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee unto the land which thy fathers possessed, and cause thee to possess it; and He will do good unto thee, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart and the hearts of thy descendants, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” In the same book (xxxii. 36) we read: “For the Lord will judge his people, and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that the power is gone, and the strong and the fortified are no more.” In these two striking passages we are distinctly told, that a state of things, like the one now existing, would one day be experienced, that it should be “a day of trouble to

Jacob ;” but that nevertheless the remnant would not be cut off ; but that at the end of days a change is to come over the face of the desolation, so that the captives should return from the most distant climates, and, converted to the service of the Lord, live peaceably in their own land, worthy servants of the Most High, and eminently deserving of his favour. But before this could come to pass, all the previously announced evil must have occurred, even to the extent of an entire dismemberment of the people, in small bodies, all over the earth ; although at the moment the prophecy was spoken they were travelling under one leader in the desert of Arabia, separate and distinct from every other nation. Without any farther reference every one must be struck with the exact state of the Jews so pointedly foretold, and the precise accomplishment of the blessings for obedience, and the curses for rebellion so emphatically announced. Without even the concurrence of other prophets the events actually experienced would stamp the prediction of Moses as true and proved ; but the confirmation becomes doubly strong, when we draw in the testimony of other messengers, all speaking before the banishment had been wholly or partially come to pass. —Let us refer to Isaiah (xi. ch. beginning v. 10): “ And it shall be on that day, the root of Jesse, who stands as the banner of people, to him the nations shall come to inquire, and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass on that day, the Lord will again stretch forth his hand to buy the remnant of his people that will be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Patross, and from Ethiopia, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will raise a banner unto the nations, and gather the banished of Israel, and the scattered of Judah He will assemble from the four corners of the earth !” The prophet here speaks in confirmation of Moses. He first alludes to the king Messiah, the root of Jesse, and asserts, that he should become a teacher, not alone to Israel, but to the whole world besides ; not that he should go after them, but that they should seek him out, to inquire of him the way of salvation, as was also said in the second chapter: “ From Zion shall go out the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” The next assertion is, that the Israelites should not be left in a

scattered state, but that from every place, whithersoever they may have wandered, they should be called together into one body. The Bible mentions the countries of Asia and Africa, and even the islands of the sea, those distant regions, where at that time none of the scattered of Judah dwelt; since the destruction of the kingdom of Judah did not take place till long after the death of Isaiah. It must also be taken into account, that only a remnant were to return! a remnant, understand! for the greater part should perish in the enemy's land. How fearfully has this been verified! Had our numbers not been thinned by the wars of extermination waged for the hundredth time against us, and by the destroying persecutions which spared neither age nor sex: our nation would by this time not have been the insignificant body it is now; but still a remnant has been left, an indestructible remainder has survived, and this very handful, compared to the rest of mankind, continues to this very hour the special object of care to an overruling Providence, and is the subject of the outpourings of the divine spirit over men, the wisest and most virtuous with whom the world was ever blest.—After having stated the intended gathering from the four corners of the earth, Isaiah continues: "Then shall depart the envy of Ephraim, and the enemies of Judah shall cease; Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, and Judah no longer be the enemy of Ephraim." Chap. li. 11, we read: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with rejoicing, and everlasting joy shall be on their heads, pleasure and joy they shall overtake, and flee away will trouble and sighing." —Chap. lii. 2: "Rouse thyself out of the dust, sit down in glory, O Jerusalem, open the bonds on thy neck, captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, for nothing you were sold, and not for silver shall you be redeemed;" ver. 6: "Therefore shall my people know my name. Verily on that day, for I am He that speak it, here I am ever. How lovely are on the mountains the feet of the announcing messenger, that bringeth tidings of peace, that announceth the good, that bringeth tidings of salvation, that sayeth to Zion: 'Thy king reigneth.' The voice of thy watchmen, they all raise their voice, they shout, for eye to eye they shall see, when the Lord returneth to Zion. Shout loudly together, ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted

his people, has redeemed Jerusalem." Chap. lix. 19 : " And they shall fear from the West the name of the Lord, and from the rising of the sun his glory—and for Zion shall come the redeemer, and for them that return from their sin in Jacob, says the Lord. And this is my covenant with them, says the Lord : My spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart thence, and out the mouth of thy children, and out the mouth of thy children's children, says the Lord, from now and for ever." What has just been adduced from the two prophets only will go to maintain our positions, that though the Messiah is certainly to be the harbinger of peace to the whole earth, it never entered into the contemplation of the seers of God to exclude the children of the covenant from a participation in the promised happiness. For what does Moses say : " And the Lord will circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest live." Does this not prove that on no account would the Almighty suffer his people to reject the chosen redeemer ? " That thou mayest live," says the prophet. Does not this presuppose that no crime deserving of rejection should be done by the Israelites with regard to Messiah ? And says Isaiah : " And for Zion shall come the redeemer, and them that return from sin in Jacob." If even there could be a doubt about the meaning of the word Zion, which as some suppose means all those as have been brought by grace under the dominion of the Lord, to which explanation, let it be remarked, we would not much object, if taken merely as an accommodation and not as argument : still the words : " And them that return from sin in Jacob," would fix the prophecy upon the literal descendant of the patriarchs especially, for it is they who have transgressed, and have drawn upon themselves the indignation of the Lord. Besides the concluding words of the covenant : " From now and for ever," confirm the construction of the passage in favour of the theory we are advocating in our address of this day. For at the time of Isaiah the spirit of God and his word were only in the mouth of the Israelites, consequently when he says, " from now"—from the moment I am speaking—it must be referring to those blessed with the possession of the Word, and of these possessors he says, " that the spirit should never



depart from them, consequently to them too, and for them the redeemer must come ; and to their Zion, the city of Jerusalem, he will repair to plant there, on the mountains of Israel, the standard of salvation, to which the nations shall flock. The restored Zion, the rebuilt temple, must be possessed by those who, sold for no price, are to be redeemed without silver; they who, for their sins expelled from the most lovely inheritance, will be restored to their home by repentance and good deeds. In their restored land also they shall dwell for ever, with none to make them afraid, and the storm of desolation, and the besom of destruction, which have so often passed over them, shall no longer be felt, for no one that is unclean of heart and defiled by wickedness will any longer pass among them.—And to illustrate this farther, we will extract one more passage from Isaiah, chap. liv. v. 8 :

בשצף קצף הסתרתי פני רגע ממך ובחסד עולם  
 רחמתיך אמר גאלך ה' : 'שעיה נר' ח' :

“ In a short anger I have hid my face from thee, but in everlasting kindness I have mercy on thee, says thy Redeemer the everlasting One.”

And he continues emphatically : “ For like the flood of Noah this shall be to me, as I have sworn, that the flood of Noah shall no more pass over the earth, thus I have sworn not to be angry any more over thee or to injure thee. For mountains may move, and hills may waver ; but my kindness from thee shall not move, and the covenant of my peace shall not waver, says the Lord that has compassion on thee.”

Can words be more forcible ? can love be more ardent ? can truth be more unwavering, than are here presented to us ?— Israel forsaken ? Jacob rejected ? As well may the mother forget her offspring, cease cherishing the child of her own body ; yea, if these even could be forgotten, God would not forget us, never would He deny us the hope of his salvation. But verily the redeemer will be sent to comfort the captives of the lonely people, who have so long borne the contumely of a proud world, because they have forsaken the law of their Father, who redeemed them from bondage to be his people and treasure !

May thy kingdom, O Lord, be speedily renewed, and do Thou bless us with the advent of the prince of peace, under whose shadow we may live securely among nations, pleasing Thee by the righteousness of our lives, so that we may ever deserve thy care and love ! Amen.

Elul 13th. }  
August 26th. } 5596.

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## DISCOURSE L.

### THE MESSIAH.

**LORD OF GLORY !** we call on Thee for protection ! How long yet shall thy children suffer ? how long yet shall thy inheritance sojourn in the land of the stranger ? May it be thy will, O gracious Father ! again to have compassion upon those that have so long borne the weight of thy wrath, and gather them from all nations, and unite them as one people on the mountains of their heritage, even the land of Israel, which thou hast sworn to give unto their fathers, and their children after them, as an everlasting possession. Amen.

### BRETHREN !

In our last address, on the subject of the expected deliverer, we adduced concurrent testimony from two prophets, to prove that a great benefit is to result to Israel from his mission.—In continuation we must observe, that the disposition to forsake the covenant of the Lord has always been the source of the greatest misfortunes that befel us, ever since we were a people. If now a time should appear, when a greater love and a more uniform adherence to the law of Heaven were to be cultivated:

then it is also reasonable to suppose, that the happiness of the nation so acting would be more amply secured than by any other means known to us; since "the ways of religion are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." And that such a time is impending, appears clearly from the prophecies of Jeremiah, who says (iii. 14-17): "Return, backsliding children! says the Lord, although I felt disgust towards you; now I will take one out of a city, and two out of a family, and bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they shall feed you in knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when you increase and multiply in the land in those days, says the Lord, men shall no more say, 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord,' for it shall not come into the thoughts, and people will not remember it, and not mention it, and nothing shall be done any more through it. But in those days they will call Jerusalem, The throne of the Lord, and unto it all the nations shall assemble, to the name of the Lord, unto Jerusalem; and they shall no more go after the wickedness of their bad heart." The meaning of this prophecy seems to be, that at the time of the advent, God will select the few that escaped the many persecutions and the great hardships of a long captivity, and restore them to their former land, where He will appoint rulers who, mindful only of justice and truth, shall rule the people after the holy law, which is, in truth, knowledge and understanding. In those days the Israelites shall multiply and increase, and none shall disturb them; and no one shall any longer swear by the ark of the covenant, for the whole congregation, in all their assemblies, shall be holy; wonders shall be wrought every where; God's majesty shall appear at all places; and to the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem shall flock the nations to worship the holy Name, the ONE God; and no more shall wickedness of heart mislead them to sin. How strangely, how strongly, does this agree with the annunciation of Isaiah! and the coincidence is the more remarkable, since the phraseology is so entirely different. In farther confirmation of the foregoing, let us examine the thirty-first chapter of the same book, ver. 1: "In those days, says the Lord, I will be God to all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." Ver. 27-34: "Behold days are coming, says

the Lord, when I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, seed of man and seed of cattle. And it shall happen, that as I have watched over them to break in, to batter, to pull down, to destroy, and to do evil: thus will I watch over them to build up and to plant, says the Lord. In those days they shall no more say, The parents have eaten green fruit, and the teeth of the children are blunted; but every one for his own sin shall die; each man that eats green fruit, his teeth shall be blunted. Behold days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers, on the day, when I took hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they violated, and I felt disgust towards them, says the Lord; for this is the covenant, which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I have placed my law in their inmost part, and upon their heart I will write it, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And not shall they any more teach one his neighbour and one his brother, saying: 'Know ye the way of the Lord!' for they all shall know me, from their small to their great ones, says the Lord, for I will pardon their transgression, and their sin I will no more remember."—In order to present a connected view of the message spoken to Jeremiah, I have extracted a considerable part of it, although against our usual custom to make so long a quotation. It will be perceived, that we are promised two things: the first, temporal security in our own land; and the second, a renewal of the covenant which the Israelites had broken, much to the displeasure of their God. The first promise requires at present no exposition, having spoken on the subject on former occasions; but concerning the new covenant a few words, by way of explanation, may perhaps be useful. The words are: "Behold, days are coming when I will make with the house of Israel and the house of Judah a new covenant." The parties are stated, not to be the nations of the earth, not a spiritual Israel, but the actual descendants from the line of Jacob, the houses of Israel and Judah. If a spiritual nation were meant, the prophet would not have particularized; for the double family is not applicable to a spiritual symbol, but only, as said, to

the nation that was at that time divided into the two contending divisions. Says the Text: "Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers," for this covenant was over and again neglected by the parties to be benefitted by its institution; but a new contract, a new agreement, of a more permanent kind, is to be entered into, to observe the laws emanating from God, or in the words used in the Bible: "I have placed my law in their inmost part and upon their heart I will write it." What is this that is to be written?—the new covenant? or if you will, a new law? by no means—the law of God which was given in former days, this is to be written upon the heart of the people; by which figurative phrase is to be conveyed, that henceforward the ordinances and statutes of the law should be indelibly fixed in the affection of our nations, so that they should never depart therefrom. Nay, more, the knowledge of God and his precepts shall be so universally diffused, that no one will need to ask for instruction concerning his duties, since all shall be taught by the Creator himself. Where is here to be discovered the smallest allusion or the most remote reference to a new dispensation, or a change in the commandments which were to be, and are, immutable? It is idle to assert, that the words covenant and law are synonymous; for if this were so, why do we always find the former used when a contract between parties is meant, and the latter when duties to be executed are spoken of? And so we read in Genesis xvii. 8–10: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy descendants after thee, the land of thy sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting inheritance; and I will be their God. And the Lord said to Abraham, But thou must observe my covenant, thou and thy descendants after thee, for all their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall observe between me and between you, and between thy descendants after thee, circumcise unto yourselves every male." Ver. 21: "But my covenant I will erect with Isaac." So also in Exodus xix. 5: "And now if you will hearken to my voice and observe my covenant, you shall be to me a dearly beloved people more than all nations; for all the earth is mine." In these passages, it will be seen, the word covenant is used, although applied to the law, in the sense of a contract, by which the people and the father of this

people, Abraham, were to be bound by certain stipulations, in return for which they should receive the more immediate and constant protection of God. But a much stronger exemplification we find in Leviticus xxvi. 14–15: “But if you will not hearken to me, and not do all these commandments; and if you will despise my statutes, and your soul find disgust in my judgments, by not doing all my commandments to destroy my covenant.” Here, the not doing the commandments is termed breaking the covenant, or, we are told, that the people by not doing the duties of religion, which is their part of the contract, would forfeit God’s love and favour, which, on his part of the contract, was to be bestowed in return for obedience.—So also: “And He told you his covenant, which He commanded you to do, the ten commandments.” Deut. iv. 14. And: “It shall come to pass, if you will hearken to these judgments, and observe and do them: then will the Lord observe to thee the covenant and the kindness which He has sworn to thy fathers.” Ibid. vii. 12. Farther: “And they shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord the God of their fathers, which He made with them, when He led them out of the land of Egypt. And they went, and served strange gods, and bowed down to them, gods that they did not know, and that He had not assigned to them.” Deut. xxix. 24–25. It will be perceived from the various texts from the Pentateuch just given, and which might be multiplied at pleasure, that the words *Berith* covenant, and *Torah* law, are not the same; and, consequently, when the prophet speaks of a new covenant, he refers to a new contract or bargain, to use a well-known homely phrase, which should be so strongly adhered to, that no infraction of the law, which is to be strictly observed on the part of the Israelites, should ever take place any more, as had been frequently the case before the time of the end, and for which the infringers of the agreement between their God and themselves had drawn upon themselves the wrath and indignation of Heaven. But now, when no longer ignorance of the details of the law will be found among the people, when all will know the Lord from the greatest to the least: then will the Almighty be their God, and they shall be his people, over whom He will

watch with particular care, and whose sin He will have forgiven.

Of the other benefits, to result from the coming of Messiah, Jeremiah speaks no less than his great predecessor, Isaiah. To place the matter in a strong light before you, we will extract one passage referring to the punishment, and another relating to the consolation of Israel. Chap. xvi. 9: "For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will cause to cease from this place before your own eyes, and in your own days, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride." But in chap. xxxii. 36-41, we are told: "And now, therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel to this city, which you say is given in the hands of the king of Babylon, with the sword, and famine, and pestilence: Behold, I will gather them from all the lands, whither I have driven them, in my wrath and my anger, and great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place, and will make them dwell securely. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give unto them one heart and one way to fear me all the days, in order that it may be good to them and to their children after them. And I will make with them a new covenant, that I will not leave them again to do good unto them; and my fear I will give into their heart, that they shall not depart from me. And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land in truth, with all my heart and all my soul."—And then, continues Jeremiah, chap. xxxiii., after adverting to the destruction which Jerusalem was at that moment suffering through the Chaldeans: "Behold, I will cause to come unto her healing and recovery, and I will heal them; and I will lay open to them a blessing of peace and truth. And I will bring back the captives of Judah, and the captives of Israel, and build them up as at the first. And I will purify them from all their sin, which they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their transgressions which they have sinned to me, and which they have rebelled against me. And she (Jerusalem) shall be to me a name of joy, praise, and glory—and to all the nations of the earth, who will hear all the good which I do to them (the Israelites), and they shall tremble and shake on account of all the

good and on account of all the peace which I do unto her.—Thus says the Lord, There shall yet be heard in this place, which you say is desolate without man and without cattle, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem that are waste without man, and without inhabitant, and without cattle: the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that say: ‘Praise ye the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for to everlasting is his mercy,’ that bring a thank-offering to the house of the Lord, for I will bring back the captives of the land as formerly, saith the Lord.—Thus has spoken the Lord of hosts, There yet shall be in this place, that is desolate without man and even cattle, and in all its cities, a place for shepherds, who make the sheep lie down; in the cities of the mountain, in the cities of the plain, and in the cities of the South, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and in the cities of Judah, the flocks shall again pass under the hands of him that counts them, says the Lord” (ver. 6–13). In continuation, the prophet speaks of the Messiah by name, calling him David, and predicts that security shall prevail all over the land. The announcement just given is also confirmed by Zechariah: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I have revenged for Zion a great revenge, and a great anger I have revenged for her. Thus saith the Lord, I have returned to Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called ‘The city of truth,’ and the mount of the Lord of hosts, the ‘Holy mountain.’ Thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet shall dwell old men and old women in the streets of Jerusalem, each with his staff in his hand from great age; and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in its streets.” Chap. viii. 2–5. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold I will save my people from the land of the rising and from the land of the setting of the sun. And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in Jerusalem, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.” Ibid. 7–8. Further: “And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt, and from the land of Assyria I will gather them, and to the land of Gilead and to the Lebanon I will bring them, but it shall not be enough for them.” x. 10.



“And I will make them strong in the Lord, and in his name they shall walk, saith the Lord.” Ibid. ver. 12.

These extracts clearly prove, that the restoration of Israel is to be accompanied by a change of the heart, which change will produce an acquiescence in the decrees of Heaven and a uniformity of sentiment and action. Ezekiel, one of the seers of the Lord, also confirms the above messages in different parts of his book, and speaks of a union and good fellowship that are to prevail among the people of the Lord, and of an entire dependence they are to show towards their Maker. These are his words : “Therefore say to the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Not for your sakes will I do it, house of Israel, but for the sake of my name, which you have profaned among the nations whither you have gone. And I will sanctify my holy name which has been profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned among them.—And I will take you from among the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you to your own land. And I will sprinkle upon you clean water and you shall be clean; from all your uncleanness and from all your abominations I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And my spirit I will put within you, and I will cause, that in my statutes you shall go, and my judgments keep and do them. And you shall dwell in the land which I have given to your ancestors, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” xxxvi. 22–28. And in continuance we read: “And speak to them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I take the children of Israel from between the nations whither they have wandered, and I will gather them from around, and bring them unto their own land. And I will make them unto *one nation* in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be to them all as king, and they shall be no more *two* nations, nor be any more divided into two kingdoms. And they shall not defile themselves any more with their idols, and with their abominations, and with all their transgressions; and I will save them from all their places where they have sinned, and I will purify them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And my servant David shall be king

over them, and one shepherd shall be to them all, and in my judgments they shall walk, and my statutes they shall observe and do them. And they shall dwell upon the land which I have given to my servant Jacob, in which their fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell there, themselves and their children, and their children's children for ever, and my servant David shall be prince to them for ever. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, an everlasting covenant it shall be with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and fix my sanctuary among them for ever. And my residence shall be over them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know, that I am the Lord, who sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them for ever." xxxvii. 21-28.

How any one professing a veneration for the prophecies of the Lord can at all misapprehend the obvious import of these consolatory messages, is indeed surprizing, and our astonishment will not be a little increased, when we discover that the same sentiments are expressed by other prophets besides those already cited. For so says Hosea: "And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, and with the fowl of heaven, and the creeping things of the earth; and the bow, and sword, and war I will break from the earth, and they shall dwell securely. And I will betrothe thee to me for ever; and I will betrothe thee to me with righteousness and with justice, and with kindness and with mercy; and I will betrothe thee to me with faith, and thou shalt know the Lord. ii. 20-22.

Joel says: "And you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion my holy mountain; and Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall no more pass through it." iv. 17.

Amos predicted: "And I will return the captives of my people Israel—and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be driven from their land, which I have given them, says the Lord thy God." ix. 14-15.

So also Zephaniah: "At the time I will bring you, and at the time I will gather you; for I will give you name and praise with all the nations of the earth, when I bring back your captives before your eyes, says the Lord." iii. 20.

From the whole of the extracts adduced, it will be clearly

perceived, that, when the time of the Lord arrives, the following must take place. First, the Israelites will be assembled from all the countries, where they are now scattered.—Secondly, division and contention among themselves will no more take place.—Thirdly, they are to dwell securely each under his own vine and each under his own fig-tree, undisturbed by any foreign foe or invader.—Fourthly, plenty and fruitfulness are to prevail in all the land of Israel, which is to be far more extensive than it was at any time before.—Fifthly, the rule of the Messiah will prevent the exercise of injustice and oppression.—And lastly, the universal acquiescence in the will of God, will preclude the recurrence of the pouring out of the wrath of Heaven over the Israelites, or in the words of the prophet : “The sin of Israel will be sought and shall be no more, and the transgression of Judah will not be found.”—These in short are the advantages which are to result to our people from the advent of the anointed of the Lord ; and although the prophets furnish yet more ample and minute details of events to occur in those days : still as the subject has been so long kept under your consideration, it is necessary to bring it to a close at present ; I do not however relinquish the idea of resuming the discussion at a later period of more leisure, when I trust to be able to treat it more clearly and intelligibly than I have done at present.

We will now proceed to elucidate the last inquiry which we proposed : “What benefit is to result to the world at large from the mission of the son of David ?” This question has almost been answered already incidently, when discussing the other points in the course of our investigation ; but still we will add a few especial elucidations drawn from the prophets.—In a preceding lecture we remarked, that the desired object of many philanthropists, the prevalence of universal peace, will then be accomplished ; but what is more, not peace alone, but a universal religion is also to prevail, and the knowledge of God and his commands is to spread all over the earth.—For so says Isaiah : “And many nations shall go and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk

in his paths, for from Zion shall go out the law and the word of God from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between the people, and decide for many nations ; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; no more shall lift up nation to nation the sword, and they shall learn no more war." ii. 3-4.—“ And the Lord shall be exalted alone on that day. And the idols shall be utterly destroyed.— On that day man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they had made for worship." Ib. 18-20.—“ They shall not injure and they shall not destroy, in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And it shall be on that day, the root of Jesse, who stands as a banner for the people, to him nations shall come to inquire, and his rest shall be glorious." Ibid. xi. 9-10.—“ And I will do a sign with them, and I will send from them those that escape to the nations Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, Tubal and Javan, the distant islands that have not heard my fame and have not seen my glory, and they shall tell my glory among the nations." Ibid. lxvi. 19.

And so also says Jeremiah : “ The Lord is my strength, my protection, and my refuge, on the day of affliction ; to Thee nations will come from the ends of the earth, and say, But falsehood have we inherited from our fathers, nothings in which there is no profit. Can a man make to himself gods ? but they are not gods. Therefore, behold, I will let them know at this time, I will let them know my hand and my strength, and they shall know that I am the Lord." xvi. 19-21.

Micah, in the commencement of the fourth chapter, fully confirms the prophecy of Isaiah, with regard to the cessation of war, and says, emphatically, that there should be none to make the peaceable inhabitants afraid ; and Habakkuk, in almost the words of the same prophet, announces : “ For the earth shall be filled to know the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." ii. 14.

But of all the prophecies relating to this great and eventful change, none is more explicit than Zephaniah, who says : “ The Lord will be terrible unto them ; for he will famish all the

gods of the earth: and men shall worship Him; each from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." ii. 10. And after adverting to the judgment of God, he continues:

כִּי אִזְ אַהֲפֹךְ אֶל עַמִּים שְׂפָה בְרוּרָה לְקִרְאָה כָּל־שֵׁם  
 ה' לְעַבְדוֹ שֵׁם אֶחָד : צַפְנִיָּה ג' ט' :

"But then I will change unto the nations a pure language; that they may all call on the name of the Lord, and serve Him with one spirit." iii. 9.

It will thus appear that the will of God has been announced as desiring to bring all the nations under his rule, that all shall call upon his name and serve him alone. This is farther confirmed by Zechariah who says: "And there shall come many people and mighty nations to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to offer their prayers before the Lord." viii. 22. So also Malachi (i. 11): "For from the rising of the sun to his setting my name is great among the nations, and at every place is sacrificed and brought to my name a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, saith the Lord of hosts." David speaks of the same change, when saying: "All the nations that Thou hast made shall come and bow down before Thee, O Lord, and honour thy name." Psalm lxxxvi. 9.

Yes, brethren! the time will come, when all nations will be brought to acknowledge alone the God that made the heavens by his might, and the earth, and all that fills it, and serve Him in truth and sincerity. We cannot determine whether the whole of the Mosaic law is to be obeyed; but it is most likely, to judge from the language of Zechariah, that a part only of the commandments, such as are best suited to the gentiles, will be imposed on them; at all events the religion of Heaven will be made the standard of right for all nations, who are to learn "of the ways of the Lord." But as yet many people walk in ignorance; "they bow to vanity and emptiness, and pray to gods that cannot help;" but one after the other will have the light made to dawn upon them, till in yon glorious time the truth will be fully revealed. Already has one entire class of men a religion analagous to ours; they declare the Lord to be God alone; but they found their belief upon the sayings of a false

prophet. Another class, smaller in number, but more endowed with the blessings of education, have separated themselves from the believers in a division of the deity, and now believe in one God; but they also put faith in a person whom we acknowledge not as a prophet sent to speak in the name of the Lord. But still the light is spreading; aye, despite of efforts of men, truth will ultimately triumph, when "the glory of God will be revealed, and all flesh shall see that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Aye, onward will be the march of light, till it will be verified what was foretold: "And I will display my greatness and holiness before the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." Higher and higher will rise the reverence for God; more and more families will be taught to honour his holy Name! superstition will yield her empire! false worship will sink into oblivion! unbelief will stand abashed! and truly, when our redeemer, David, son of Jesse of Bethlehem, is sent: the universal law will be every where acknowledged, truth will dwell in all places, and in every house there will be worshippers of the Lord, in every bosom there will beat a heart that acknowledges no prophet as the teacher of a heavenly law but Moses, and no God save our almighty Father and Ruler, who spoke all these words through his servants, and faithfully kept his promises to those who hope for Him, and long for the time when He will dwell again in Zion. In those days and in that period will be fulfilled what the prophet predicted: "The Lord shall be One, and his name ONE." And all mankind shall then acknowledge, that the Everlasting alone is King, Creator, and Preserver, and to Him alone appertain the power, and the glory, and the dominion!

This is the reign of the Messiah; and this is the change which is impending. In the whole of the exposition laid before you the Scriptures alone have been consulted, and the subject was allowed to unfold itself gradually to your reflection; nothing unreasonable was brought forward in the course of the argument; and thus, by the favour of Heaven, I have been permitted to add another demonstration to the well established fact, that reason and revelation are not inconsistent. It is now time to draw my labours to a close; and let me breathe

the fervent hope, that the pains and care, which have been very great, bestowed upon so interesting a subject, may not have been without a commensurate share of benefit; for myself at least it has been the case; and the more I entered into the study of the scheme of revelation, the more rivetted became my astonishment and veneration; astonishment at the consistency of the whole chain of predictions; and veneration for that great Being that spoke all, and has also fulfilled, as we daily see; for in all our captivity, and in all our wanderings, it was his holy Spirit that ever upheld us. This beneficence will also guide the whole world, and ultimately all will like us be led to fall down and worship before Him, who is the Lord alone, unending and omnipotent, and without whom there is neither God, Saviour, nor Redeemer!

Sovereign of the universe! Upheld by thy bounty, sustained by thy grace, we have been preserved before Thee unto this day! O let us experience thy favour henceforward, and guide us in thy knowledge to thy service. And cause thy spirit to breathe comfort into our souls when we are afflicted; and cause all the sons of men to be enlightened of thy wisdom; so that they too may be brought to thy worship, as are the children of thy servants, to whom Thou didst promise, that Thou would be their God, and never forsake them even in their captivity and sufferings.—O do now display thy glory, as Thou hast said, and build up the temple where thy name is to dwell for ever, and send the redeemer, even thy anointed one, to heal the wounds which we have been struck for our manifold transgressions. O do it for the sake of thy holy name, that has been profaned among the nations; and let all the world see, that thou art God in Israel, and that there is none like Thee, O Thou, who art our Creator, God, and King! Amen.

Kislev 23d. }  
December 3d. } 5597.

NOTE.—The discourses on the subject of Messiah must not be viewed as a complete treatise, but merely as an illustration of the doctrines connected therewith. I must also distinctly state, that I hold myself alone responsible for the arguments and sentiments advanced, and that whatever of error and deficiency may be discovered should not be laid as a fault against our religion, but solely to my inadequacy of doing the subject complete justice. I

would likewise state, that when I began the discussion, I thought of finishing it in one, or at most, in two lectures; but by degrees, becoming more interested than I myself at first expected, I continued during several months, and had at length to finish it, almost abruptly, because I had to draw the matter to some sort of a conclusion, before these volumes had entirely gone through the press. I do not, however, ask to be excused for gross errors, which I trust will not be found; but only to receive the reader's indulgence, if he should not find all he may wish or expect from me. But, as I have said in the text, I do yet hope of resuming the discussion at some future period; and in the meantime I would be greatly obliged for any hints, advices, or corrections from any one, whether Israelite or not; as I think, that by a mutual interchange of opinions, candidly and temperately exhibited, the truth and holiness of the divine law will be best proved to the satisfaction of the many, and the happiness and welfare of all.



# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT

THE SYNAGOGUE MIKVEH ISRAEL,

IN BEHALF OF

## THE FEMALE HEBREW BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

OF PHILADELPHIA,

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1836—HESHVAN 26, 5597.

ORDER OF SERVICE:—Prayer—Lesson on Charity, chapter lviii. of Isaiah—Annual Report—Address—Psalm xc., in conclusion. After which a liberal collection for the funds of the charity was taken up.

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### PRAYER.

SOVEREIGN of the universe! In thy house assembled, we approach thy mercy's seat to ask thy blessing upon our humble endeavour. We know, O our Father! that our strength is like weakness before Thee; and that our wisdom is like folly before thy wisdom; and that all our virtue must appear imperfection before thy holiness.—We humbly, therefore, beseech Thee to grant us thy assistance in our earnest striving to serve Thee, and cause, O cause, naught but what is pleasing and good in thy eyes to result from our labour. Let thy name be sanctified through us, and may nothing occur through our means, by which others might be led to sin. Open our hearts to a knowledge of thy law, and remove from us the heart of stone, and give us a heart of flesh, and a spirit willing to serve Thee.—Give also to us all, and to each of thy children, our daily bread, and cause thy blessing to alight upon the work of our hands; so that we may, each and all, receive our maintenance from thy hand which is full, and open, and holy, and ample, and which scatters bounties to all flesh and creatures, that were

created by thy potent word ; and cause us not to stand in need of the gifts of flesh and blood, nor of their loans ; for their gifts are small, and their shame is great. But, if Thou hast decreed poverty and affliction as our lot on earth : O then give us firmness to bear thy dispensations without repining, and let our sorrows rise up to Thee, as an atonement for our misdeeds, and hear our prayer in thy holy abode, in order to purify our hearts and to cleanse us from our transgressions ; so that, shielded by thy grace, we may live to please Thee, and to merit thy mercy and forgiveness, O Thou, who art our Father, King, and God ! Amen.

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## ADDRESS.

### DUTY AND SCOPE OF CHARITY.

#### LADIES AND GENTLEMEN !

In the report of the managers which has just been read, there have been exhibited to you the proceedings of a number of benevolent daughters of our people, who for near twenty years have, with means quite inadequate for so noble a purpose, endeavoured to succour the distresses of their fellow-beings. There always has been, and whilst society is organized as it now is, there always must be, a great share of suffering ; and whether the cause be inability to labour, sickness, loss of fortune, or lastly, improvidence even : the sufferers have a claim upon the sympathies and means of those who are blessed with the opportunity and ability of granting relief.—But if individuals be ever so kind, if their hearts are ever open to the calls of humanity : still the poor, especially if he has seen better days, must feel some hesitation to lay his distressed situation

open before them, justly dreading a refusal, even allowing that he should not fear, nor need to fear, being treated with unkindness, besides having his petition unattended to. If, however, the sufferer knows that a society exists, established for no other purpose, acting from no other motive, than dispensing good to all according to its ability : then he has a fund which he may call his own, and friends in the managers of the charity, who will soothe and solace him, and look into his wants, and relieve them, whilst the fund for distribution is not totally exhausted. It is indeed a pursuit well worthy the daughters of our ancient race, to become as it were the patrons of the needy ones ; to enter their humble dwellings, perhaps in the dreary season of blighting winter, and seek out a fellow-sister who, like them, may once have been radiant with youthful bloom, shining forth with all the elegance of splendid attire, and attractive by the sallies of wit and intelligenee.—But through the vicissitudes, to which all are liable, sad reverses have befallen her ; one by one her friends have departed ; relative after relative was borne to the grave ; her worldly substance was swallowed up by unforeseen mishaps ; and now, in some distant quarter of a large city, she has been overtaken by the cold chill of winter, with her resources exhausted, and without the ability of earning the merest necessaries of life. The managers of a charity, like the one before us, enter her abode. The cheerful flame again visits her cold neglected hearth ; the exhausted larder is replenished ; and the lonely sufferer's heart is lightened by the kind and cheerful converse of the friendly sister, and to heaven ascend the grateful thanks, and upon the benevolent is poured out the blessing of a soul snatched from the gloom of despair, now rejoicing over the timely assistance, sent almost as was to the prophet of old the widow of Zarepta, to feed him in the days of famine.—But my friends ! also like the means of the benevolent widow, the funds of our society are but limited, and often indeed have the managers had to husband their resources carefully and sparingly, in order to enable them to grant a moderate relief to all standing in need of their assistance. And in seasons of severe cold, their charitable intentions, especially with regard to providing fuel for the poor, which necessary article, is often, as you all know, beyond the reach of those who most

need it : the wants of the necessitous poor have not been adequately supplied ; since the managers, in order to let none go unassisted, had to divide the means at command in small portions among the many that needed. It is not to be denied that, prompt to the call of distress, our brethren always have been, and no doubt always will be, ready to dispense the blessings of benevolence to all that want ; I only need to call to mind one instance of not very old occurrence, where sojourners and wanderers were amply provided for, as soon as their necessities were made public. Still this does nowise do away with the propriety, the duty I may say, of better endowing a charity like our Ladies' Benevolent Society, and of strengthening their hands, in order to enable them to permit the stream of their benevolence to flow in a broader and deeper channel. Perhaps, hard thoughts may have been entertained at times, when the relief was not so promptly and amply bestowed as those who interested themselves for the distressed ones thought it ought to be. But it should be remembered, that before any thing is given, it is the duty of the managers to investigate and look into the cases presented to them, to prevent any improper waste of the fund entrusted to their care, and to see that not the least thereof be diverted into improper channels. Nevertheless, after satisfying themselves that the applicant is fully deserving of aid, it often happens that with the best intentions the managers have to stint their charity, much to their sorrow, because of the insufficiency of their means. It is to be regretted that, as appears from the report of the board, a part of their available means derived from interest on a certain investment\* has failed this year ; and the same may happen again, and be another proof of the insufficiency of human caution and foresight to secure against unwelcome visitations. The more necessity there is for promptness of action in those charitably disposed. A season is approaching, when in the ordinary course of events much suffering among the poor must be expected. This is the case in ordinary times, when the Almighty has poured out ample stores over the earth for the sustenance of man. But in his wisdom, which none of us dare to question, He has caused the

\* The Union Canal Loan.

visitation of stinted crops to fall upon these shores, that almost uniformly have before this teemed with plenty. In addition to this, from the combination of the labouring and producing classes, the price of almost every thing that enters into the use and consumption of a family has been raised to an exorbitant height. It must therefore be self-evident, that many must be the poor, who may not be able to procure their usual portion of comforts and necessaries, if the coming winter should even be but moderately rigorous. But should it hold the earth in its icy fetters with the same severity, and for an equal space as last year: who will be able to calculate the amount of suffering that would ensue! Many persons who now can live, and hitherto always have lived, by the labour of their own hands, will then not be able to do so any more, and unless He who giveth food “to the children of the raven, when they cry” sends them unexpected aid and enlargement: they will have to seek assistance from their fellow-mortals, from those “whose gifts are small, and whose shame is great.” Would it then not well befit descendants of Abraham, to arise in time, and to provide the “poor man’s treasure” with means, in order that it may bestow its blessings to all who may need?—The institution in whose behalf this appeal is made to you, does not so much give money as purchase the things needful, which alone are given to its pensioners; and in its managers you have ladies, the wives, sisters, daughters, and relatives of your own selves, and no encomium need be passed upon them or their exertions to induce you to believe, that whatever is placed under their charge will be well bestowed.—And for what is your bounty asked?—Is it to rear up splendid palaces for the residence of the oppressors of the people? is it to send your substance to feed sufferers in a distant land?—No, it is none of these; you are called upon to remember the poor within your own gates, to succour the distressed that are amongst yourselves; to cheer the heart of some lonely widow; to illumine with joy the humble home of the fatherless; and to solace the indigent mother amidst her toils to provide food and garments for her needy offspring. Shall I paint to you the anguish which such a mother must feel, when she looks with apprehension dire to the coming days of wintry frost, with the certain conviction that her unremitted toil

will not give bread even to her helpless babes? Shall I exhibit her to you despairing, when the last handful of fuel is thrown on the almost dying embers—when the last morsel of coarse food is devoured—when the hungry—half famished—almost naked innocents huddle together on the miserable pallet in a night when fearfully rages without the winter's blast, and drives in the sleet and snow through the open crevices of the almost roofless cottage? Say, shall I lay open this mother's heart, as she in despair calls on her God to take her, together with her suffering little ones, unto his heavenly abode? Is your charity to slumber, till such a dreadful picture of suffering humanity is absolutely brought under your observation? And yet such objects of distress have been; yes, the poor have perished from want of warmth, from lack of food, whilst the sons of affluence rolled over the frozen ground ensconced within their chariot of ease, enrobed with the skin of the costly sable; when their table was covered with untasted luxuries; yes, when the winter's chill was absolutely banished from their carpeted halls; when the useless fires blazed within every corner of their splendid chambers; when the wine cup passed round the social circle; when the merry song was heard, and blithesome music ravished the soul. But will you, beloved friends, be the luxurious rich, the heartless worldlings, living at ease, rioting in pleasure, tasting of dainties, whilst near you a brother suffers, whilst in your city a fellow-mortal groans under poverty's weight? No; this may never be; no, the descendants of Israel will not suffer this reproach to rest on themselves! for at all times, ennobling charity has characterised our people, and liberality of heart and kindness of feeling have ever remained a peculiar feature in our disposition; yea, amidst the persecution of tyrants, amidst the stunning scorn of our oppressors. And what does the law, which we all revere, say on the subject of charity? It commands us to open our hearts to the calls of the sufferers, and to give according to the blessing of the Lord which has been vouchsafed to us. We are commanded, to leave a corner of the field for the stranger, the widow, and the orphan; the sheaf forgotten in the field must go to the same destination: the fruit-tree when once plucked, the gleanings must be for the poor; but as now the Israelites no longer are an agricultural people, and as we no

longer live in one community secure and isolated ; it is still our duty to observe the spirit of these precepts. Let the rich therefore give a corner of his amassed wealth into the poor man's treasure ; let the husbandman and merchant, when settling their yearly accounts, drop their superfluous gains into the grainery of the Lord, and thus swell their amount of virtues by the small largess which they let fall to the share of their suffering brethren.—Yet charity, to be an acceptable offering to the Deity, should not be a mere unwilling gift, but it should flow spontaneously from the heart of the giver ; as we read in Deut. chapter xv. beginning at verse 7 : “ If there should be a needy one among thee, one from thy brethren, in one of thy gates, which the Lord thy God gives thee : thou shalt not harden thy heart, and shalt not close thy hand against thy brother the needy. For thou shalt open thy hand to him, and lend unto him according to the want he may want. Take heed unto thyself, lest there be any thing godless in thy heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of remission, is nigh ; and thy eye would thus be bad against thy brother the needy, and thou wouldst not give to him ; and if he should call concerning thee unto the Lord, it would be a sin in thee. Thou must give unto him, and thy heart must not grieve, when thou givest to him ; for on account of this thing the Lord thy God will bless thee in all thy works, and in all the doings of thy hands. For the needy will not cease from the midst of the land : I therefore command thee, saying, thou shalt open thy hand to thy brother, to thy poor, to thy needy one, in thy land.” From this eloquent passage it appears, that unwilling charity is not what the Lord desires ; but we are exhorted to let our liberality be accompanied by a willingness of heart, knowing as we must do, that by whatever we bestow we make a loan, as it were, to our heavenly Father, who will increase our store as a recompense for our hastening to the relief of his children, the poor, our brethren, that are amongst us. In furtherance of this divine behest it has been our custom from time immemorial to form ourselves into societies, and to raise, so to say, treasures in the name of the Lord, for the relief of the needy. Some of these have for their object the relief of the sick and the burial of the dead ; may these be spread

into every congregation of Israelites, and their means be blest. Others are to give relief to the portionless traveller, and to bestow largesses unto those that are needy; may the Lord bless these also, and cause them to prosper and multiply in the land. Others are to dispense the blessings of education to the children of the necessitous, and to teach them how to serve their Creator and God, and to walk in his ordinances; may these too be blessed, and may hopeful fruits answer the expectation of their benevolent founders. Others again there are, whose object is to apportion dowerless maidens, and to cause the helpless orphan to dwell in the house of her husband in humble content; may our Father look upon these with favour, and cause many happy matrons to call for blessings upon the friends of their helpless youth! Others at last there are, that, like our Female Benevolent Society, enter the abode of wretchedness, to look carefully into the wants of suffering sisters and brothers of Israel, and to cause every visit to be an earnest of relief and assistance; to cheer the soul of the afflicted, and to rescue ignorance from the way of destruction. Surely such institutions deserve the benison of Heaven; and those, whom He above blesses, merit the favour of man! Shall, then, our sisters appeal in vain to you, my beloved hearers? Shall your own mothers, wives, sisters, relatives and friends, be compelled to tell the suffering poor, that their treasury is empty and their funds exhausted? May this disgrace never attach to our name; on the contrary, sons of Israel, you whom the Lord has blest, open your hearts to the appeal of the distressed, before it is uttered loudly in your ears; fill to overflowing the store of the benevolent, and enable them, to go on prosperously in their goodly task, and to relieve and to succour all on whom the heavy hand of misfortune may fall.—And you, daughters of Yeshurun, who have so nobly embarked in the cause, go on and prosper, for the Lord your God is with you; go on, scatter consolation into the hearts of the afflicted, and light up with joy the countenance of the mourners; go on, restore warmth and the genial flame to the deserted hearth, and replenish the larder that is exhausted; go on, rescue from sin those whom dire poverty tempts to transgress; and O forget not the task, most delightful of all, to instruct the young mind,



to awaken the tender soul to a knowledge of the Creator, and assist the distressed mother to enable her to rear up the children that the Lord has given her, a joy to herself, an honour to you, and servants to their Maker. If all thus combine, if our brothers and sisters go hand in hand doing and bestowing good: how joyfully must life then pass away, and how sweetly will then rise to Heaven the incense of thankful hearts, recalled from despair, and taught in their hour of distress, that even to this day our ancient race are true to their pristine virtue; and that they are still worthy of being called the children of the Lord.

Heshvan 26th. }  
November 6th. } 5597.

# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT

THE SYNAGOGUE SHEERITH ISRAEL,

IN BEHALF OF

THE SOCIETY

FOR THE EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN, ETC.

OF NEW YORK,

ON THANKSGIVING-DAY, THURSDAY, DEC. 15, 1836—TEBETH 7, 5597.

ORDER OF SERVICE:—אָרױן עולם—Prayer for Government—Prayer—Psalm lxvii.—Address—Collection for the funds of the Society—and, in conclusion, יגדל. The whole service, with the exception of the Prayer and Address, was conducted by the Rev. Isaac B. Seixas, Minister of the above Congregation.

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## PRAYER.

O LORD GOD of fathers, we call upon Thee, to bestow on us the watchfulness of thy providence; for we well know, and we have been taught that before Thee all is naught, and that from thy omnipotence there is no fleeing.—In old times it was that Thou decreedst punishment against thy chosen people Israel, because they had sinned and transgressed thy righteous commandments; and they who thought themselves secure behind their impregnable walls, within their fortresses of strength, were led away captive before their foe!—And their oppressors too have felt the weight of thy power; and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome, they who mocked the sorrows of the children of thy inheritance, have been overthrown, when their day of sorrow came, and all have proved in their turns, that before Thee no mortal power can stand, and that thy will builds up nations, and that, in thy justice, kingdoms perish and are as though they had not been!

But in our own day, too, we have witnessed the manifestations of thy might. For Thou spokest, and the destroyer hastened onward on his message of death, and thousands fell beneath the sword that was drawn over many a devoted land. Aye, and vain were the efforts of impotent men; and on the high mountains; in the barren deserts; by the verdant rivers; on the pathless ocean; in the sunny South, and in the cold of the North, were the slain of thy awful visitation; and we were emphatically taught, that thy goodness alone saved us, that thy mercy alone shielded us, when mortals quailed and yielded in despair the contest against the minister of thy vengeance upon the sinful sons of the earth!

The warning passed on, and the danger was over, and we soon forgot Thee, who hadst saved us. But again Thou calledst on the curse of war, and lands that weened they were secured in peace and prosperity, heard the din of arms and preparation for battle resound in their boundaries, and blood has flowed in streams; because men thought not of Thee, and trusted in their own wisdom and power.—Anon, Thou beheldest how vain men trusted too much in their riches; they imagined that they need not serve Thee, because their wealth was extensive and their possessions widely spread; but Thou commandedst, and the flames\* went forth, and houses that seemed to bid defiance to time, crumbled into ashes in one single hour; human efforts stood aghast, mortal striving was vain against thy power, and thy fire went on spreading and desolating, till the proud were made to feel thy greatness, and till the heart of the arrogant was made humble before Thee. For they who in their mansions gay listened in the evening-hour to the sound of the merry viol; the light-hearted who in mirth expected a joyful morrow; the lordly bridegroom, at whose side smiled the lovely bride: saw not the sun rise over their splendour, because one night of desolation had robbed them of all the wealth on which they had built their hopes.—Yet we heeded not, and we wended our way, regardless of thy covenant, heedless of the coming

\* In allusion to the great fire that laid waste a considerable part of New York, on the 16th and 17th of December, 1835, fifty-two weeks from the day on which the above was spoken.

storm; but the land that had been ever fruitful, the soil that had always nourished, have failed to give their return to the expectant husbandman, and the measure of bread has been lessened by the unfruitfulness of the seasons.—Thus we have seen thy workings manifested before our eyes; O do Thou enlighten our souls, that we may bow to thy dispensations, and endeavour to merit thy favour by our obedience to thy will!—And behold us this day assembled in thy holy house to call on thy holy name, and to thank Thee, because of the many escapes which Thou hast vouchsafed to us and to the other inhabitants of this city; and especially to ask of thy bounty a further continuance of thy providence and care.—And O Thou, who art the Friend of the stranger, the Protector of the widow, and the Father of the orphan, look with favour upon these thy children, who have met in this thy sanctuary, to devise means of diffusing blessings upon the needy and the suffering, and who in this manner endeavour to imitate thy deeds of mercy. And do Thou with thy spirit of wisdom guide them rightly, so that servants devoted to Thee may spring up as the fruit of their striving, and that they, who are now obdurate of heart and forgetful of thy power, may be led through these to fall down and worship at the foot of thy throne!—And let thy name be sanctified through our humble works, and may our acts of piety, feeble and few though they be, redound to diffuse the knowledge of thy glory and be the cause of manifold blessing to us, and all thy people Israel.—And we further petition Thee, O Sovereign Lord of the universe, that as through thy kindness this devastated city has been rebuilt with more than its former strength and beauty, Thou mayest also speedily cause the cities of our own heritage to rise from their ashes, and to be rebuilt in security, peace, splendour, and holiness; and that Thou mayest again erect the temple on thy holy mountain, whither the nations are to come and worship Thee alone, O our Father! and let our ears be gladdened and our hearts be rejoiced by the announcement of the joyful tidings, that to Zion has come the redeemer, and that thy blessed Messiah has appeared to unfurl the standard of thy salvation to all nations and all tongues! Amen.

## ADDRESS.

## ON THE OBJECTS OF CHARITY.

## BRETHREN!

It was in ancient days, when the worshippers of the true God were few, and the mass of mankind sunk in superstition and ignorance, that the Lord of the universe descended in his majesty to give unto his chosen people laws and statutes for their guidance. Centuries have elapsed since that glorious day; empires have risen—and empires have fallen;—nations were born—and nations perished; and still the legacy of Heaven is the guide-star of Jacob's children, still the revelation from Sinai is the law which the Israelites obey! Aye—this has been the instrument in the hands of our Father above of preserving us amidst all the sufferings and chastisements we had to encounter, because of our manifold transgressions; and we have been spared, miraculously upheld, amidst the wreck of kingdoms, and the annihilation of entire nations, by this best gift which the Creator could confer upon the works of his hands. And although we have been often rebellious and disobedient to the divine mandates: still there never yet was a time, when the blessed law did not strike a chord of harmony in our hearts; for despite of sin we have remained a faithful people, since the divine revelation has at all times found its defenders among the descendants of the patriarchs, the friends and adorers of the God of heaven and earth!

One of the characteristics of our nation, and one which is so strictly enforced in the records of revelation, has always been our kindness to them as need our assistance; and the assembly this day in the house of God proves, that the ancient spirit of benevolence is not extinct among my hearers. For what brings you here? is it to listen to sounds of enchanting music? is it to partake of the viands at some festive board? or is it perhaps to

celebrate the achievement of some mighty conqueror? or to do homage at the throne of earthly power? No, my friends! you came hither to be excited to feelings of kindness and devotion; you bent your steps to this holy edifice, consecrated to our almighty Father, to raise your eyes, to elevate your thoughts, to yield your hearts in adoration of Him, and you are here assembled to be prepared to give of the treasures with which you are blest to the poor within your gates, and to assist with your substance and with your counsel the unprotected orphan, whose parents were removed before the charges entrusted to their keeping had reached that age, when they need no longer the watchful eye of the father, and the tender care and protecting mercy of the mother! And well it is that there are those who feel for another's wo! for turn we where we will, we must discover many on whom have fallen the burthens of afflicting poverty, and who suffer ills from which no human exertions are able to extricate them. When the benevolent then looks into their wants, and remembers that the sufferers are men like himself, and that our God demands that he should succour the needy: the glow of kindness at once warms his heart, and with the hungry the loaf is divided, and the naked go not away unclothed. And although by such deeds of charity the needy are certainly benefitted: it may nevertheless be maintained that the giver is also blest. For who would be heardhearted enough, unless he loved gold more than any thing else on earth, and lived only for himself, to enjoy the comforts which his means will afford him, if a trifle freely bestowed would tend to alleviate the sufferings of his neighbour? who but the arrogant would be willing to luxuriate alone in the pleasures of science and refined life, if made conscious, that by his exertions many a poor might be snatched from ignorance and vice, to become, like himself, an ornament of human nature? Yes, brethren, much as we may excuse ourselves for neglect of charity, by averring that we are unable to relieve all the suffering, and to remove all the evil that come under our notice: it may freely be maintained, that, if concerted efforts were made, if one would take counsel with the other, and proceed hand-in-hand to further the goodly cause, sufferings would be

relieved that are now galling and almost force the humble to despair, and evils would be remedied that now threaten at times the subversion of social organization and order.

It was for the furtherance of these objects that the members of the society, who celebrate their anniversary this day, formed the bond of union, to relieve the distresses of the stranger, of the unprovided poor, of the unprotected widow and orphan, and of those who may be overtaken by the rigours of winter without adequate comforts to combat with the severity of the season. In the countries beyond yon great water, that washes the confines of this extensive city, many of our brethren find themselves unable to procure the necessaries of life by their labour. Or, again, oppressed by tyrannical rulers, because of their descent from the great names of former ages, suffering under the opprobrium of being members of the Jewish nation, they find a longer residence in their native land next to impossible. They hear, that in this favoured clime industry is rewarded by a full return ; they are told, that in these States, which are free, and long may their freedom continue, the sons of Israel are permitted to assemble and call upon their Father in heaven after their ancient manner without let or hinderance. They make therefore every exertion to reach these shores. Behold them descending from the bark that carried them hither ; their means are exhausted by reason of long travel ; they are ignorant of the manners and the language of the new home they have been seeking ; to whom shall they apply ? to individuals the burden would become too heavy ; and even if some one blest with extraordinary riches and possessed of unbounded benevolence could be found, still his own occupations, which every one must have, would prevent him from giving due attention to the cases of the distressed strangers. But if there exists an institution like our society, they may apply to the persons selected to bestow the charity with a well-founded hope, that every thing will be done to relieve their wants and to aid them with wholesome advice, and to point out the way by which not alone present distress may be relieved, but which will enable them to obtain an honest livelihood for themselves by their own exertions, and be thus enabled to dispense the bounties of benevolence to those who may come after them.

And when they find themselves blessed with ease and competence, they will thank our God, that He had caused to prosper an association whose aim it is to do good without hope of reward.

Many a one has been in affluence in days gone by ; he had hoped, that his latter days would be free from want and care. But who is able to rely with confidence upon the stability of aught in this evanescent world? His fortune was dissipated little by little, from the effects, perhaps, of too much confidence placed in the undeserving; or from the suddenness of political changes which caused his well-laid plans to fail ; or from the weight of diseases with which he or his family may have been afflicted. Could he, who had seen better days, resort to begging, perchance to be refused and spurned by those through whose villany he was reduced to his present distressed situation ? No, not whilst a society exists, who in relieving feel no interest in making the applicant ashamed; who in bestowing need not, will not, publicly proclaim that a fellow-being has been reduced to poverty; who in succouring distress will screen the wounded and tender feelings which the needy often experience. And when in his old days comfort dwells in his house, he will ask the peace of Heaven upon the benevolent that cheered his declining years.

In the day of youthful vigour man treads lightly the path of life. Fortune seems to smile on his enterprize, and he dreads not the coming day of evil. He enjoys life, because of the buoyancy of his heart, and he dreams not that it is incumbent on him to husband his resources and to lay up provision for his family, because of the coming day of death. But alas ! the enemy may be lurking near, although unperceived ! and suddenly the youthful aspirant is taken from the midst of his pursuits, and he is borne to the silent, dark, and narrow grave. When living, the world thought him prosperous ; but the gay outside deceived them ; and when the lonely widow looks into the deranged affairs of her departed husband, she discovers that beggary and want are before her. From a heartless, selfish world, that only laugh with the prosperous, but frown upon the unhappy, she may not, cannot, look for support in her straits ; but when the helping hand of a society like ours is near, she



has friends who will console and assist her ; and when her heart has ceased to mourn, she will lift up her soul to God, and thank Him that he raised up to her friends in the hour of trouble, of need, and affliction.

But above all do they deserve protection, whose natural guardians have been early removed, who are left, as it were, desolate and lonely on the ocean of life, with no guide-star to point out the way, with no watchful steersman to guard against the shoals, the rocks, the waves of existence. How many are there thus forsaken ! and how many who are lost because of the want of some kind friend to protect and shield at the very time of life, when care and watchfulness are doubly required. It may well comport with the views of the proud and selfish to leave those to go to destruction, who have no wealth to bestow, no favours to grant. But how would they feel, were they to be made conscious that they should die in want, their wives be left helpless widows, and their children unprotected orphans ? And is this end so very improbable to those even who deem themselves firmly seated ? ask the annals of poverty, what are the sons of the great and wealthy ? and you will be told, that they are among the miserably poor ; and descendants of kings are houseless wanderers, strangers and exiles from the countries which their fathers governed ! It may indeed be said, that, the higher the prosperity, the nearer man is to his fall. And such a fall ! from a proud eminence to the lowest degradation ! from the royal banquet to the scaffold, from the palace to the prison ! Should the rich man then not remember in his prosperity the fatherless and the widow, in order that when his own children and the wife of his own bosom may call, they too shall find fathers and protectors in benevolent friends,—friends, raised to éminence and distinction peradventure by the fruits of the very charity bestowed by him from his useless superfluities in the days of his ease and prosperity ? And ask, who sit among the great of the land ? whose advice is listened to among the counsellors and governors ? who are they that scatter blessings wherever they go ? and you will be told, they are the sons of the lonely widow, the children of humble parents, the orphan who neither had a father's care nor a mother's love, raised by a life of integrity, of virtue, and of kindness, to the

proud eminence which they now enjoy. And is it not something animating to the charitably disposed to believe that, by his exertions, some one may perhaps be raised from an humble condition, perhaps from vice and its concomitant degradation, to a sphere of usefulness and happiness? But there are those so acting; there always have been friends of their species, who disdained not to spend their time and their means, however small, to effect so noble a work. There once lived, in a distant land, a man who walked humbly before his Maker. Industrious he was, but fortune smiled not upon his exertions. It pleased Him, who thrones in heaven, to afflict him with sufferings long and severe, almost beyond endurance; yet he repined not, but yielded a cheerful submission to the just decrees of his God. Anon, the wife of his heart, was taken away to the realms of bliss, where her virtues will shine for ever, amid the servants and adorers of the Lord; and he was left to struggle on a few brief years longer, to provide by the sweat of his brow for the wants of his offspring. But his end also soon approached, before they for whom he toiled were old enough to battle with the world and its dangers. Yet the children of the righteous were not forsaken; and after the father had resigned his spirit in tranquillity, and joy at a release from his long-endured pain and hardship, they each found friends to be to them in a father's place, although his love and tender care could never be compensated by acts of the kindest relatives and indulgent friends. And one there was who, feeble of strength, and often and early subject to bodily disease, was unable to labour for the support of his weak frame. Was he now left to struggle in hopeless and sickening toil for a scanty and tearful support? No; for there was a man, beloved of God and honoured of all that knew him, who, though blest with but small means, had yet always a mite for those that were needy. He felt for the orphan-boy, took him as his own child, watched over his youth with paternal care, instructed him in the way of righteousness, and taught him to fear the Creator, and to look to Him for support in all his afflictions. And when the youth needed farther assistance, more than the beloved teacher himself could give; when the light of more extended knowledge was required for his mind: he induced other sons of Israel to lend their aid

to finish the goodly work which he had begun. Years passed away, and the orphan sought a home in a distant land, where the relatives of his mother offered him the welcome of a father's house; there his efforts have been blest, and those are now his friends, that, but for the assistance of the blessed teacher in Israel, would never have known his name. The benevolent one has gone to his reward before the Father whom he so faithfully served, whose laws he so faithfully taught; and the orphan, who wept over his father's bier as one almost forsaken, now addresses you, and pleads for the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless!

Although it must be admitted that the task of protecting the children of persons not connected with ourselves, must be, in a measure, highly laborious and unpleasant, especially if, by previous neglect, their manners should have become corrupted, and their minds vitiated: still we ought not to forget, that the children are not to be blamed for the negligence of their progenitors, and that, if they are vicious and stubborn, proper means should be employed to cure them of these obstacles to moral improvement. Of all means which are likely to effect this end, none seems to me more promising than an extended system of useful scientific and religious education, of which all the children of persons of our persuasion should be permitted to partake; not so much a free-school, but one open to all; to the wealthy for a moderate contribution, and to the poor for whatever they can give, or without any price whatever, if their means will not permit them to pay. It must be apparent to the most casual observer, that many of the evils to which society is exposed, proceed from two great causes; first, the want of information; secondly, the want of *correct* instruction. Absolute ignorance will be conceded on all sides to be very pernicious, as such a deficiency will leave the mind open to be influenced by all impulses which the world may instil, and to be ruled by passions and desires to which the best of men are subject, but which they keep down by moral government. But if we come to examine the bad consequences arising from a want of correct instruction, we will soon find that they are fully as pernicious as the effects of ignorance. Take for instance a young man conversant with all the learning of the schools; imagine him to be accomplished in the arts of

riding, dancing, music, and painting; add to these as many other things as you please, but leave out a careful religious training, which is most likely the only subject either slightly touched upon or altogether pretermitted: what, I would ask can you expect from the heartless, finished gentleman, as he is termed? Does he bear love for God?—by no means, this was not included in his course of discipline; does he look upon his acquirements with meekness? is he humble? is he modest? not at all; for he was praised for his knowledge in his own presence, and he has not yet learned that others can be as wise as himself;—does he love his fellow-men? no, not he, for they are all his rivals, they stand in the way of his preferment, or else, they are too low, too mean, too much beneath his notice. And what are the effects of such an education?—ask the beguiled maiden, whose sinful course has driven her from a father's home! ask the deceived associate, who confided too firmly upon the word of his supposed friend; ask the heart-broken mother, when she laments too late that she did not teach her son to adore and fear his Maker and to walk in his statutes, as his fathers had done before him! It is needless to expatiate at greater length upon a proposition so evident. And as Israelites cannot gain a knowledge of their religion from strangers: it is evidently a duty incumbent on them to provide teachers of their own, who, besides being capable of imparting useful knowledge and elegant accomplishments, should also be qualified, both by character and information, to teach the holy religion we profess. There are abundant materials in this city, the chief residence of our brethren in America, for the formation of an institution on Jewish principles; and doubtlessly, if sufficient encouragement were held out, men of distinguished talents would soon be found, who would gladly assume the hopeful task of rearing up our youths and our maidens in the knowledge and the service of their Creator and God. And if, in addition to this, associations should be founded, whose aim it would be to procure employment for our young men without a profanation of the Sabbath; who would endeavour to elevate the character of our people by making of our poor something more useful than itinerant traders: a blessed spectacle would speedily be exhibited, of our community regenerated from

many faults laid to their charge ; for our houses of worship would be filled with devout, attentive adorers ; the Sabbath of the Lord would become a delight to many, now strangers to its blessings ; the family circles on the festivals would be again completed ; and in short we should be distinguished for something more than merely a successful pursuit of wealth ; and no more would attach to our name the reproach of a people bent on the acquisition of earthly goods and forgetful of their permanent happiness.—And never tell me, that it is impossible to earn a livelihood without transgressing the divine mandates ! for how is it that our forefathers lived at ease and respected, in countries where they were subject to oppression and maltreatment ! How is it that so many even here find time to serve their heavenly Father, and yet are blest with all that their hearts can desire ? It may be that there are great difficulties in the way of a strict religious course in large commercial cities, where the competition in every employment is so very great ; but still it seems to be utterly impossible to justify the so general forgetfulness of religious duties on these grounds, especially as honest candour would seem to warrant the assertion that concerted exertion would do a great deal towards combating, if not entirely removing, the evil.

Both the objects just mentioned, the diffusion of religious knowledge, and the promotion of a stricter conformity to religious observances, seem to be properly within the province of our society. For their laws say :

“The funds of this society shall be applied to the following purposes :—

- 1st. Relief to the orphans and widows of deceased members.
- 2d. Elementary and Religious Education, and Trades, to such Orphans, and to the Children of Indigent Jews, giving a preference to those of indigent or deceased members. And in all cases, where evidence of superior talent in any child shall manifest itself, to extend, if practicable, a liberal education.
- 3d. Aid to all Jews in distress under such regulations as may hereafter be prescribed.”

It will be seen from the foregoing, that the founders of the

society contemplated such an institution as I have been urging upon your attention ; for it is not to be supposed, that Religious Education could be obtained at any other than our own schools, nor is it credible, that after a child should have been religiously educated, he should be bound out to a stranger and compelled to eat of food prohibited by the law, and to labour on the days which, as he was taught, are consecrated to the service of Heaven.—This surely could never have been the intention of the benevolent, who associated themselves to diffuse the blessings of charity. Let them therefore rouse themselves to establish the good work which they have contemplated ; let them draw the children of the rich, of the moderate in circumstances, and of the poor, into one common school, where all may uniformly be taught the religion of our Father in heaven ; and if it should then unfortunately happen, that indigence or early bereavement throw any child upon the bounty of the world, the managers will not have to contend against ignorance, and against vice, brought on by the not knowing the way of life and salvation ! It is to be hoped, that should such a seminary be commenced, none but worthy men should be appointed as instructors ; and that, on the other hand, the wealthy would not disdain to let their children mix in fellowship and brotherly love with the offspring of the humble ; for who knows, but that the descendants of the affluent may in after-life be indebted for aid to those who were inferiors to them in youth ; besides it would teach them to place a proper value upon the fleeting possessions of our earthly existence, when they discover that the poor too have feelings like themselves, and are endowed by the Creator with the same intellect, and are from their worth deserving of respect and kindness. And if teachers should come among you, O then treat them with proper regard, you who are fathers and mothers in Israel ; endeavour to second their exertions to benefit your children, and let these hear nothing from you which could in the least tend to induce them to esteem lightly their spiritual parents ! Can any one doubt that happy fruits would be the result of such a pious course. And what can be the end, if something is not done, and speedily done, to arrest the growing evil, and to check the forgetfulness of the

divine mandates, which has spread its poison so fatally for many years over the younger part of the Jews ?

Doubtlessly the society, who wish to take charge of the poor, the orphan, and the widow, have not means enough to accomplish all their benevolent plans ; but year after year their funds are accumulating, and when their wealth has greatly increased, they then will be able to do whatever the founders at first purposed. But shall the rising generation in the mean time languish and thirst for the word of God, and find no one to satisfy their desire ? Shall the poor apply in vain to an exhausted treasure, when sickness oppresses his humble home, when penury checks his hopeless labour ? Shall the orphan be cast abroad, with none to feel compassion for his helpless state ? Shall the widow, she, perhaps, who in better days bestowed her bread to the hungry and clothed the naked—shall she in her old days be allowed to suffer, because there is no one to plead for her, when distress overtakes her ?—Never be this said of men, of Israelites ! There are here now present those who are greatly blessed, with means beyond their wants ; let them open their hearts, and give freely unto the treasure, whence the sufferings of many may be relieved, through which many may be rescued from ignorance, from ignominy, and irreligion ! They, whose substance is not so extensive, let them also give according to their abilities, and let them be assured, that no loss will accrue from the bounty bestowed, to benefit the people of the Lord, the poor, the needy, and the afflicted.—And, lastly, the poor also, let them give their trifle, and let them be convinced, that though the gift be small, the ever-kind Father will yet look upon the heart, and bless the sincere offering that is made in his service. If all thus contribute, and if all will lend their aid and counsel to further the goodly work—blessing and prosperity will attend the efforts of our society, and they who are now but few in number (which it is hoped may this day be increased manifold) will be the supports of the poor, the props of the widow, and the fathers of the fatherless. And will not our God bless his servants that thus endeavour to glorify his holy NAME ? Assuredly, for these are the words of the inspired one, who says :

הביאו את כל המעשר אל בית האוצר ויהי טרף בבתי  
 ובחנוני נא בזאת אמר ה' צבאות אם לא אפתח לכם את  
 ארבות השמים והריקותי לכם ברכה עד בלי די : מלא' ג' :

“Bring ye all the tenth part into the treasury-house, that it may serve as a provision in my house; and prove me, I pray you, in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and shower you down blessing without measure.” Malachi iii. 10.

Here, friends and brethren, you have the distinct announcement, that benevolence will not be followed by temporary loss, besides that it brings imperishable treasures. Do you then, prove the Lord in this! open your stores of wealth, fill up his treasury to overflowing, and strengthen the hands of the stewards in God's household, that they may be enabled to give provision to the poor who live in the world, his land; perhaps the Lord may see it and receive your doing in favour, and cause much good to result from your effort; and perhaps He may stay, in his mercy, the devouring flame, that it consume not again the labours of many years; perhaps He may decree blessing on the crops that are growing, and send plenty, and health, and contentment to the inhabitants of this city and of this country.—Come! rouse yourselves men of Israel! rise in your strength sons and daughters of Yeshurun! join in with the band of the faithful who have not relinquished the task of ministering to the wants of their fellow-mortals! and let not this day pass before you have all resolved to serve the Almighty, the everlasting One our God, and to love and to fear Him all the days that you may live on this earth; so that you may be favourably received in the embrace of the ever-blessed Father, when your race is run, when you will receive the recompense meet for those who remained true and firm to the commands of the law, undismayed by temptation, unswayed by interest, loving and adoring the Being who is God alone, and whose rule is from everlasting to everlasting.

May the God of our fathers be with you all, and bless, guard, and save you, and give you peace and contentment here below, and happiness and satisfaction in yonder mansions of bliss, when



your souls have sped hence, to receive at his judgment-seat their portion with the righteous who have obeyed his will ; and may you rise again to unending life and imperishable happiness at the day, when the slumberers in the dust shall be quickened unto life before the Father of all ! Amen.

Tebeth 1st. }  
December 9th. } 5597.



THE END.

## CORRECTIONS.

- Vol. I. p. 98, line 7 from bottom, read: That there is a *Watchfulness*  
which is ever awake; that there is a *Providence*  
which never slumbers.
- p. 130, line 2 from above, for Psalms, read Psalm.
- p. 178, line 19 from above, for shows, read show.
- p. 266, line 13 from below, for tranksgiving, read thanksgiving.
- Vol. II. p. 190, line 10 from above, for rojoice, read rejoice.
- p. 226, line 3 from bottom, for canon, read cannon.

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